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HANSARD'S

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES:

THIRD SERIES,

COMMENCING WITH THE ACCESSION OF

WILLIAM IV.

11° & 12° VICTORIÆ, 1847-1848.

VOL. XCIX.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM

THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF MAY

TO

THE THIRTIETH DAY OF JUNE, 1848.

Fifth Volume of the Session.

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1848.

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HANSARD'S

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

IN THE

FIRST SESSION OF THE *FIFTEENTH PARLIAMENT* OF
THE UNITED KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*,
APPOINTED TO MEET 21 SEPTEMBER, 1847, AND FROM THENCE
CONTINUED TILL 18 NOVEMBER, 1847, IN THE ELEVENTH YEAR
OF THE REIGN OF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

FIFTH VOLUME OF THE SESSION.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, May 29, 1848.

MINUTES.] PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Archibald Hastie, from the Island of Ceylon, for a Reduction of Duty of Coffee.—By Sir John M'Taggart, from Magistrates and Council of the Burgh of Whithorn, and Others, for Inquiry into Excise Laws.—By Mr. M'Gregor, from Glasgow, for Abolition of Arrestment of Wages (Scotland).—By Lord G. Bentinck, from Master Mariners and Seamen of South Shields, and by other Hon. Members, from several Places, against a Repeal of the Navigation Laws.

SPANISH CORRESPONDENCE.

MR. H. BAILLIE wished to ask the noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs a question with reference to the Spanish correspondence. The noble Lord had laid on the table of the House the correspondence from the Foreign Office, but he had omitted altogether the correspondence of the Spanish Government. It was commonly reported that certain charges and statements had been made by the Spanish Government against the British Minister. It was very desirable that the House should have the statements of the Spanish Government, if such statements had been made.

VISCOUNT PALMERSTON: At present I have no such statements.

TRIAL OF MR. MITCHEL.

MR. KEOGH: Sir, I wish to put a question to the noble Lord at the head of the Government. Is it a fact that on the late trial of Mr. John Mitchel for felony, every Roman Catholic was excluded in open court by the Attorney General, without any cause assigned? Perhaps the noble Lord will be able to state whether he has received any information as to a similar proceeding on the late trials of Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Meagher.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL: I have received no information with respect to the last trial which took place. With respect to the two other trials regarding which the hon. Gentleman brought forward a Motion last week, I have here a letter from the Attorney General with regard to his instructions, in which he says—

"In answer to your letter requiring my instructions relative to the course to be pursued by you in setting aside jurors on the part of the Crown in the case of 'the Queen *v.* Mitchel,' I beg to say it is not, and never was, my wish or intention that any juror should be set aside on account of his religious opinions. I do not think the instruction given by previous law officers, that jurors were not to be set aside on account of their political opinions, was ever intended to apply to a case like the present, in which a party is to be tried for a political offence, and is openly supported and countenanced by certain political associations. I have therefore no hesitation in saying, that in the present and similar cases you should set aside on the part of the Crown, without regard to their religious opinions, all persons whom, from the inquiries you have made, and the information you have received, you find to entertain political opinions according with those of the prisoner and the associations by whom he is supported. I am clearly of opinion that to leave such persons on the jury would be to defeat the administration of the law, and be totally inconsistent with the true principle of trial by jury, which is, that the juror should be indifferent between the Crown and the prisoner. In other respects I wish that the instructions given by the previous law officers should be adhered to."

The noble Lord next read an extract from a private letter from the Earl of Clarendon, which contained a reference to the mode of striking the jury in the case of the late Mr. O'Connell, when prosecuted by Sir Robert Peel's Government.

Mr. GRATTAN: Does the noble Lord say that every Roman Catholic professing repeal principles is to be excluded from juries?

Lord JOHN RUSSELL: I think the words of Mr. Monahan are very right and judicious, and I have no hesitation in adopting them.

DEATH OF THE PRINCESS SOPHIA.

Lord JOHN RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, before we proceed to the business of the day, I beg to move—

> "That an humble address be presented to Her Majesty, to express the deep concern of this House, at the loss which Her Majesty has sustained by the death of Her Royal Highness the Princess Sophia, and to condole with Her Majesty on this melancholy occasion, and to assure Her Majesty that this House will ever participate with the most affectionate and dutiful attachment in whatever may concern the feelings and interest of Her Majesty and Her Illustrious House."

I am sure the House will be ready to express its regret at the melancholy event of the death of a person of so much goodness and kindness of heart, notwithstanding painful sufferings and long illness, which were borne with the utmost patience and resignation.

Sir R. PEEL: Perhaps, Sir, I may be allowed to second the Motion of the noble Lord. Every one acquainted with her Royal Highness will bear testimony that the influence of her kind and benevolent feelings were extended beyond the sphere in which she moved.

TRIAL OF MR. MITCHEL.

Sir JAMES GRAHAM: Sir, having heard the letter by Mr. Monahan with reference to the instructions given by the late Government respecting the selection of the jury in Mr. O'Connell's case, and believing also—although it is not quite regular that I should allude to it—that a similar reference, on a former evening, was made to this subject, on behalf of the late Government; and in justice to that Government, and with reference also to a point of fact, I may be allowed to assert, in the most positive manner, that the instructions given by the late Government, with reference to the striking off the jurors in Mr. O'Connell's case, were identical with the instructions made to Mr. Monahan given in the case to which the noble Lord has referred. The instructions were positive that no juror should be struck off that list on account of his religion, but that, whatever his religion might be, if he were tainted either by association or identity of communication with the opinions, with reference to repeal, entertained by Mr. O'Connell, then the power of the Crown to strike off jurors should be used. I assert most positively that the instructions are identical; and if it were necessary to go into detail, I could prove that ten Roman Catholics were struck off the jury in Mr. O'Connell's case—were struck off upon evidence that was satisfactory to the agent of the Crown that they were in political connexion with the Repeal Association; and on no occasion whatever was the power exercised with reference to religion.

Lord JOHN RUSSELL: What I read, as proceeding from Lord Clarendon, certainly alluded to the charge which was brought against the late Government, but it is not in any way adopted by Lord Clarendon; but knowing that a charge was brought against the late Government, both Lord Clarendon and myself were alive to the necessity of preventing any accusation being brought against the present Government for a similar cause. I do not mean in the least to deny or impute that the instructions were not identical.

Mr. BRIGHT: Sir, it is quite evident from what has passed in this House of late, and from what has been said to-night, that it was the opinion of the Government that it was highly desirable that the trial of Mr. Mitchel should take place, and that a conviction should be obtained. Now, I am not the least disposed to complain of this opinion of the Government; but there is another thing at least as important for the pacification of Ireland, and for cementing, if possible, the union between the two countries—and it is this, that the people of Ireland should be fully convinced that in the trial of a person charged with a grave offence, whether political or otherwise, that person should have that fair trial which the constitution of this country offers, and declares shall be had by the meanest subject of the Crown. Now I am not about to say that Mr. Mitchel is not guilty of everything laid to his charge, nor will I, for a moment, say that the verdict that has been returned is not a verdict in accordance with the evidence and with the law. But, if we may judge from the reports which appear in the public papers—and those reports will be read not in England only, but throughout Great Britain—and not in Great Britain only, but by every person who can read in Ireland—it seems that there were 150 persons upon the panel; that of those only, if I mistake not, 28 were Roman Catholics, although it is represented, by the same authority, that the largest portion of jurors in Dublin are of the Roman Catholic persuasion; that of those 150 only sixty-five or seventy-five—seventy-five I think—answered to their names; that of these the Government had the power of striking off to an unlimited extent; that the prisoner had the power of striking off to a limited extent; and that the parties for the Crown struck off every person who was of the Roman Catholic religion. Now, it is quite possible that every one of those persons was known to have sympathised with the prisoner at the bar, and it is quite possible that not one of the eighteen persons was competent to give a fair verdict upon the case; but the people of Ireland will not so consider it; and as six-sevenths of the population of the country are of the Roman Catholic persuasion, I believe that the universal opinion among six-sevenths of the people will be, that they are not considered by the Government to be competent to give a fair opinion, or to be asked to take part in a jury which shall try a political offence in that country. Now, I am not bringing a charge against the Government. It is just possible that they had no other course open to them. But it is worth while to consider whether it is not our bounden duty to ascertain, if possible, if there be means at the disposal of the House for bringing those six-sevenths of the population of Ireland in opinion, more in harmony and accordance, with the people and Government of this country, in order that these discreditable political trials may have an end, and that we may now have seen the last of them. I am persuaded that the deportation of Mr. Mitchel will not pacify Ireland. I hope that while the Government have shown the power of the law, and their determination to exert it, they will show an equal determination in—

Mr. LAW: I rise to order, Sir: there is no question before the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is the Address of Condolence.

Mr. BRIGHT: I say, Sir, while the Government have shown the power of the law and their determination—

Mr. LAW: I rise to order again, Sir. The hon. Gentleman is not speaking to the question.

Mr. SPEAKER: Members who have preceded the hon. Gentleman have spoken upon the subject he is referring to.

Mr. BRIGHT: I am not disposed to trespass for a moment on the attention of the House beyond the time so important a case as this demands; and by this time I should have concluded my observations if the hon. Gentleman had not interrupted me. I say that as the Government have shown a determination to enfore the law, I call upon them to show to the people of Ireland that, whilst the law is to be enforced, there is also mercy in this House, from which the law emanates. I am perfectly certain of this, that the people of England would go with very great unanimity in favour of overturning and abolishing one of the institutions of Ireland, which has been in past times, and is now, at the root of most of the evils that afflict that country; and in my opinion your first step should be to take away the Church in Ireland, the members of which you declare are the only class you can take for your juries, thereby excluding six-sevenths of the population of Ireland. Such a state of things is disgraceful to this House, and cannot much longer be tolerated.

Mr. GRATTAN: Allow me to say that my hon. Friend is quite mistaken in the Catholics, if he says that they cannot be got to convict. I believe it will be found that the Catholic juries are as honest as any of the Protestant juries. I have just come over from Dublin. I stood upon Kingstown quay yesterday morning, and when it was heard that Mr. Mitchel was transported, I myself heard men and women in throngs cry out, "We never were Repealers until now, and now we will be Repealers for the rest of our days." I tell the Government that this is the greatest mistake they ever made. They have acted like cowards. They might have enforced the common law; but no, they came to this House, and obtained an abominable Act, which they have enforced. Mr. Mitchel may have sinned, but I would never murder a man in the dark. I say that there never was anything more monstrous than a Government getting an officer to pack a jury, and proceeding as they have done. Of the 5,000 names which that officer had to deal with, 4,000 were Catholics—a proportion of more than three to one. Yet, upon the panel list sent in by the sheriff, the proportion was one Catholic to five Protestants. My hon. Friend forgets that every Catholic was struck off. These monstrous proceedings will not only be read in England—for let me tell my hon. Friend that more people can read besides those in England—I tell my hon. Friend that they will be read in those countries where the fame of England is as dear to us as it ought to be to you. They will be read in France—they will be read by the millions of Irishmen in America; and what will they say and think? If this course be persisted in, you will want more than 50,000 soldiers in Dublin. Depend upon it that the time will come when your power will fall. You depend now upon other countries; but the day will come when that power will fail you, and when Ireland falls you must fall. The noble Lord's doctrine seems to be, that Ireland may fall, but England shall stand. You have surrounded Lord Clarendon with spies and informers. Let any Gentleman go to Dublin, and he will find more pikes in the Government buildings than anywhere else. I have made inquiries in my own immediate neighbourhood, and I could not find a pike anywhere. If the Government had left the matter in the hands of that excellent man, Lord Clarendon, his good sense and honest feeling and honest heart would have taught him the proper course for him to have pursued.

Mr. BRIGHT: It seems as dangerous to defend Ireland as to attack her. The hon. Gentleman has entirely mistaken what I said with reference to Catholics being on juries. I never expressed an opinion that they were not fit to be jurors; what I said was this, that the course which had been pursued led to the inference that the Government were of opinion that they could not trust Catholics upon juries. But then I say, if that be true, which I do not hold to be true, it leads to this conclusion, that six-sevenths of the population are not in harmony with the Government, and therefore cannot be called in to help the Government in carrying out the law. My belief is precisely in accordance with the opinion which the hon. Gentleman himself has been expressing; and I never was more astonished in my life than when the hon. Gentleman replied to me.

Mr. E. B. ROCHE dissented from the principles of Mr. Mitchel as much as any man; but at the same time it was his belief that it was of the highest importance that if the Government had occasion to appeal to the laws of the country against those who opposed them, they should take care, for their own reputation, that the parties were tried by an impartial jury. He was bound to say, that after the letter which the noble Lord had read from Mr. Monahan, the people of Ireland would not consider that the jury had been impartially selected. Mr. Mitchel, after his conviction, had declared that 300 were prepared to do what he had done. The Government, therefore, would have to resort to juries again. In the letter which the noble Lord had read, it was said that every man professing repeal principles was to be struck off the jury. If it were necessary to strike off the list every man who was a repealer, it was impossible that Mr. Mitchel or any man who agreed with him could be tried by a fair and impartial jury. If the principle of Mr. Monahan's letter were to be carried out, it would be far better and more straightforward to abolish altogether trial by jury in Ireland.

Mr. KEOGH observed, that he had not objected to striking off juries persons holding repeal principles when the question was connected with repeal opinions. His objection was, that Roman Catholics of the highest respectability and of great wealth in the city of Dublin, and in no way attached to repeal principles, but opposed to them, had been struck off the jury by the Attorney General. He had stated that of his own knowledge, and should be glad to know from the Government the reason of their being struck off.

Lord J. RUSSELL said, he had given

the House all the information he had received, namely, the instructions which the Attorney General gave to the Crown Solicitor. If he received any further information, he would give it to the hon. Gentleman publicly in that House.

Motion agreed to *nem. con.* Address to be presented by Members of the House who are Members of the Privy Council.

THE NAVIGATION LAWS—MINISTERIAL MEASURE.

Order of the Day for a Committee of the whole House on the Resolution moved on Monday, May 15, read.

On the question that Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair,

MR. HERRIES rose to move the following Resolution, of which he had given notice:—

> "That it is essential to the national interests of this country to maintain the fundamental principles of the existing Navigation Laws; subject to such modification as may be best calculated to obviate any proved inconvenience to the commerce of the United Kingdom and its dependencies, without danger to our national strength."

The right hon. Gentleman said, the course he had taken on this occasion certainly required that he should briefly explain to the House why he had been induced to adopt it. The measure introduced by Her Majesty's Ministers upon this most important subject, had not been brought before the House in the mode which would have been most fitting for enabling those who differed from the proposition in part, if not in the whole, fairly to state the grounds of their opinions, and discuss *seriatim* the resolutions which would have been presented to them, had Ministers chosen to take the most convenient course, so that the House might have dealt with the resolutions separately, and might have affirmed such portions of them as they could agree to. Ministers had adopted a different course: they had proposed a very sweeping and comprehensive resolution for the abrogation of the navigation laws of this kingdom. They had accompanied this with qualifications and modifications, some of them important, not conveyed to them in the shape of resolutions at all, but which they were to gather from the speech of the Minister who introduced the subject to the House. It was for that reason chiefly he had thought it necessary to bring the whole subject, as briefly as he could, under the consideration of the House, with the view of inducing them to express, in opposition to the sweeping proposal of Her Majesty's Ministers, an opinion more consonant to the great interests of this country, which would meet with more approbation from the public, and would tend more than the Ministers' resolution to remove any evils which might exist in the present shape of our navigation laws, and at the same time would give perfect assurance that the main principle of those laws would not be abandoned. He would shortly advert to the nature of the question, and the position in which it stood; for in that would consist very much the ground on which he thought it his duty to oppose as well the principles of the measure as the season and the circumstances of its introduction. Early last Session a Committee was appointed, not at the suggestion of the Government, but of a private Member of that House, for inquiry into the operation of the navigation laws. That Committee continued its labours till the end of the Session, and then had not arrived at such a point as to enable it to present a report to the House. At that moment, therefore, they were in possession of no opinion from that or any other Committee appointed to sit on this subject, although the evidence gathered from the various witnesses examined was voluminous, and had elicited very important opinions, and much information, more or less valuable, bearing on the question. At the commencement of this Session it might well have been expected, as this inquiry was so incomplete, and as, pending the course of it, Her Majesty's Government might have been supposed to have adopted some view of their own, that a new Committee would have been appointed to continue the inquiry thus broken off. Government took another course: without further inquiry they thought proper to announce in their Speech from the Throne their intention to enter upon the subject in these terms:—

> "Her Majesty recommends to the consideration of Parliament the laws which regulate the navigation of the United Kingdom, with a view to ascertain whether any change can be adopted, which, without danger to our maritime strength, may promote the commercial and colonial interests of the empire."

Such was the announcement made to them at the meeting of Parliament in November; it was now six months since that period, and during the whole of that time Ministers had not thought fit to lay before the House either the views they entertained, or the measures they intended to propose. If ever there was a measure which required the longest possible time fully to weigh its consequences, and to collect the opinions of those in the country who would be most deeply affected by it, and give the Legislature time fully to discuss it; it was this which had now been submitted to the House. Was it to meet some special, instant, and imminent danger, that this great measure was now so suddenly and hastily pressed forward? Was it to remove some evil at this moment calling upon the Government for an immediate remedy? Was there any reason which could justify a Government in thus postponing for a length of time the declaration of their intentions, and then requiring that their measure should be adopted without adequate time for a full and fair consideration of its merits and its consequences, not only in Parliament, but throughout the country? There never was a time in which so little reason for such precipitancy could be urged on this head as the present. Under these circumstances, he felt it to be his duty to call the attention of the House to the great principle involved, so that instead of debating in Committee, upon a general resolution only, the character and effects of the measure proposed, he thought the House should first come to a decision whether it was right and proper, under present circumstances, to abandon or uphold the very principle of the navigation laws. He had another reason for recommending this course. Although the Ministers in that House had not thought fit to institute a further inquiry, the other House of Parliament, judging more wisely—taking, as he thought, a sounder and more constitutional view of this great question—had thought it right to appoint a Committee to take evidence and collect information upon this momentous question, as a preliminary step to their own decisions upon it. A portion of the evidence taken on that subject in their Lordships' Committee was now before the House; and he rejoiced that it was, for it would furnish very material grounds on which to resist the measure of Ministers at present, and to call, if not for its abandonment, at least for a considerable postponement of it. Let the House observe, moreover, the point of difficulty which might arise from the attempt to press the measure through this House under such circumstances. The Government proposed to legislate upon the evidence, such as it was, now before the House of Commons. But the Lords had appointed a Committee to carry that inquiry farther, which had already made some progress, and was still sitting. It was certainly possible, and from the evidence already produced it might be said to be highly probable, that their Lordships would be led to a conclusion diametrically opposite to that of the Government. What embarrassing consequences might there not arise from sending up a Bill to the House of Lords—if the Commons should pass such an one—for the abolition of the navigation laws, knowing that information was before their Lordships leading them to resolve on the maintenance of those laws, and the rejection of the Government measure! These surely were cogent considerations for inducing the utmost caution, and affording the most ample time, in dealing with this great question, which, according to the plan of the Government, proposed nothing less than to destroy entirely the protection which had hitherto been afforded by law to British seamen and British ships in all trades except the coasting trade. By a strange policy it reserved the coasting trade alone out of the wreck of all the rest, while it might not be difficult to show, that of all classes and descriptions of our maritime trade, this was perhaps the least susceptible of invasion or deterioration by foreign competition. Something indeed had been said about reservation of the fisheries; but the exemption did not relate to fisheries in the proper sense of the word, for the right hon. Gentleman had explained that the produce of the deep sea fisheries—the whale fisheries—was to be admitted equally in foreign and British ships into this country. It seemed to him to have reference to our fishing grounds only, which had really nothing to do with the navigation laws. But before he proceeded farther, he must call the attention of the House to a most remarkable incongruity in the proposed measure, which might serve as a fair specimen of the consistency, the justice, and the wisdom of the whole plan. It was proposed entirely to abrogate all the protection hitherto afforded to British ships and seamen in trading with foreign countries, and also with our own colonies; and yet it was also proposed to reserve the burdensome conditions hitherto imposed upon the British shipowner, and to require him to continue to man his ship as under the existing conditions of the navigation laws, exposing him thus to all their onerous provisions, and casting away the protection in consideration of which only those burdens had hitherto been imposed on him. This singular condition was announced, with much emphasis, as a very essential feature of the measure. The Government had been six months concocting their plan; it had, no doubt, been most carefully considered; and yet it contained this most marvellous proposition—such an one, he ventured to say, as no Parliament would be unwise enough to pass—that the British shipowner should from this time forth be exposed to unqualified competition with those he could not encounter without protection; and yet should continue to bear burdens which had been imposed upon him, not for his own but the national advantage, and solely in consideration of the protection which the navigation laws afforded to him. The right hon. Gentleman in his speech had truly said, that the alterations he proposed were of a grave and serious nature—that they went to the foundation of the navigation laws—and that the changes he recommended were more vital and extensive than had probably ever been submitted to Parliament. That was perfectly true, and was an additional reason why the proposition should not have been submitted to Parliament so late as it had been, and with a view to immediate legislation. No legislator, however strong his opinions on free trade, or however disposed towards reform, had ever yet proposed the abrogation of the navigation laws. The most eminent of all legislators in liberal commercial policy, Mr. Huskisson, would have heard of their abrogation with dismay. It might have been expected that the right hon. Gentleman, in proposing a measure of such vast importance to the country, would have taken some pains to show the necessity for so sweeping a change, and would have pointed out in some detail the benefits which they might hope to derive in return for the sacrifice they were required to make. A radical change in the fundamental principle of our maritime policy, upholden and cherished for more than two centuries, ought surely not to be hastily adopted, unless it could be distinctly demonstrated that advantages of the highest character might be expected to result from it. But the right hon. Gentleman had not sufficiently shown either the necessity for the change, or the advantages that were to flow from it. He explained in great detail the nature of the measure; but he glanced very slightly at those reasons of State which demanded a retention of our present navigation system; and he (Mr. Herries) had yet to receive a satisfactory exposition of the grounds upon which this great alteration was proposed, and how it was that the right hon. Gentleman imagined that so great a venture would be followed by no danger to the interests of the country. Of all the reasons given for this change, none was more groundless than that founded on the demand made by some foreign countries. Demand from England there was none. They had received not a few petitions on the subject; but on which side were they? One petition indeed, had that night been presented by the right hon. Gentleman from the city of London on the subject; but he was in a condition to say that another petition of a very different weight and character would be in his hands very soon for presentation from the same place against the proposed alteration. From all the great maritime towns of England there were the strongest representations in favour of the existing laws; while on the other side there was no pressure from any part of the country in favour of the proposal of the Government. The right hon. Gentleman had, however, read to them applications from three quarters; and he very impressively and very emphatically called the attention of the House to them as deserving the highest consideration. One of these was from Prussia, one from America, and the other from Jamaica. [Mr. LABOUCHERE: And from Canada,] Canada might, perhaps, have been mentioned; but Jamaica was the one most relied upon; and he could not allow the right hon. Gentleman to slip out of Jamaica, as he would hereafter show how little ground there was for founding a demand on that application. The first of these applicants for an alteration in the great English naval laws—the staple of our maritime power—was Prussia. Now he would ask, with what justice or propriety Prussia could come, at the present time with that which the right hon. Gentlemen hesitated to call a menace, but which he said was a voice of warning, to ask us to make this alteration? Prussia came to us, after having witnessed, for 20 years and more, every disposition on our part to meet, fairly and freely, the commercial interests of Prussia in conjunction with our own; and, after having made with us treaties, by the effect of which she had derived an enormous accession to her maritime power. Prussia had enjoyed, under reciprocal treaties with us, advantages by which her shipping employed in her intercourse with this country had been encreased threefold, while that of England in the same trade had been considerably diminished. He did not complain of those advantages to Prussia, nor did he wish to abrogate the treaties with that country. He was in favour of those treaties when they were negotiated, and had the honour of co-operating with Mr. Huskisson when he promoted them, and he had not then nor since disapproved of one single part of the policy which that eminent statesman then pursued. He had, therefore, no desire to disturb the present arrangements with Prussia. Wherever it was found possible to promote the interests of our commerce with foreign countries by mutual concession, he was in favour of such a course, and would not hesitate to say that the stringent provisions of our navigation laws ought in such cases to be relaxed. But what right had Prussia, at the close of a long reciprocal compact, to come and tell us that we ought still further to relax our navigation laws and principles in her favour, and that too beyond the limits of our direct trade with her? What was there in the position or power of Prussia that should "frighten us from our propriety?" Who gave Prussia a just claim, or any claim at all, to insist upon our making so enormous a concession as was involved in the total repeal of our navigation laws? What could Prussia give us in exchange for such a concession to her, as would be the admission of her ships to trade between this country and our colonies, and also between this country and the East? What could she give us in exchange for the abandonment of an exclusive preference of our own sailors and ships in these important lines of commerce? When the right hon. Gentleman received a "menace" from Prussia, he might well, instead of making any concession to it, have reminded Prussia of the footing upon which the respective interests of England and Prussia really stood, and have shown how Prussia had enjoyed by far the largest share of the advantages which were guaranteed by existing treaties; while her threats were of no importance, for she was not able to wrestle successfully in commercial hostility or rivalry with the greatest maritime nation in the world. The right hon. Gentleman, however, stated, with some degree of satisfaction, that the appointment of the Committee moved for by the hon. Member for Stoke-upon-Trent had the effect of "suspending the blow" which Prussia was prepared to strike. Was it then come to this, that the commercial greatness and naval pre-eminence of this country were saved, only because an hon. Member of that House had chosen to make a Motion for the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the operation of our navigation laws? What was the amount of the commercial intercourse of Prussia with this country? How much did Prussia take of our manufactures? The last return he saw showed that she took somewhere about 500,000*l.* worth of our goods annually. How much did England take of hers in return? The accounts of our Custom-house would not show the exact quantity, because it was blended with the general account under the head of "Germany;" but certain he was that it was greater by an enormous amount. He did not hesitate to assert that of all the Continental Powers Prussia had been the least liberal in her intercourse with this country. In fact, English manufactures were almost excluded from Prussia. The good or evil that country had it in her power to effect with respect to England, weighed as nothing when compared with the loss which England would sustain in power and influence if, in deference to that or any other State, the navigation laws were to be abrogated. Prussia knew very well that she might perhaps manage to press a little on the Government, and enable the Ministers to use her menace to some advantage in that House; but she was also fully sensible that it was not on such flimsy grounds that the Legislature would consent to the abrogation of that policy by virtue of which Great Britain had attained her unrivalled maritime influence and great naval power. They were given to understand that there was another foreign State which did not threaten but invited England to adopt the course which the Ministers were now disposed to shape out for her, and that that State was America. Now, he meant no disrespect to America; but he would take leave to say what was, indeed, a notorious fact, that America never made any proposition to any other country without having previously ascertained, with great certainty, that she would herself be a gainer by it. America, with unexampled disinterestedness, now came forward to make this very kind proposal, that if we abolished the navigation laws, so far as they related to our colonial intercourse, she would do the same by us. But America had got no colonies, and it was wholly out of her power to give us any equivalent for the advantage she would be sure to acquire by reason of the abolition of our navigation laws. Why did not the right hon. Gentleman opposite make some such proposition as this to America:—"Since you are so very liberal, and so very anxious to free commerce from all the trammels which enthral it—since you have so much at heart the promotion of the general commerce of the universe—begin by removing your own navigation laws, which are quite as stringent as ours?" If America had acquiesced, she might, then, with some grace, solicit the abolition of the navigation laws of England; but, as matters now stood, the bargain was not equal. America had nothing to give England in the smallest degree comparable with what she would obtain from the repeal of the English navigation laws, and the permission to trade freely with and between all our colonies and their mother country. No more unequal bargain had ever been recorded in the history of international compacts. But he found no mention of any such inequitable compact in the communications of Mr. Bancroft, the American Minister. Mr. Bancroft did nothing more than express a disposition to meet this country half way in an attempt to remove any vexatious and unnecessary restrictions by which the commercial intercourse between both countries might be trammelled; which was a different thing altogether from insisting on the abrogation, without condition, of that code of laws to which England was mainly indebted for her mercantile greatness and her supremacy on the seas. To make any such proposition would exceed the powers of face even of an American statesman. But then there were our own colonies. Was it they who had asked for this sweeping change? It was said so, indeed, in some quarters having a deep interest in our colonial possessions; but since those opinions had been expressed, facts, and circumstances had been brought to light materially calculated to alter them, and greatly to qualify the importance to be attached to any application professing to emanate from the colonies. Enough had been elicited by the inquiries which had been instituted before a Committee of the other House, to show that it was not for the interests of any of the colonies, and least of all for those of our West Indian possessions, that the navigation laws should, with all their concomitant conditions, be revoked. He held in his hand the first report of the inquiry before the Committee of the Lords, and he found that there was a vast preponderance of opinion among the merchants examined as witnesses before that Committee in favour of the maintenance of them. Those witnesses did not think that any advantage would result to them from the proposed alteration. Thirty merchants were examined, and of these the chief evidence was, with few exceptions, that they were not even aware of the pressure of the navigation laws. A few of the witnesses admitted that they thought a reduction in freights might be effected, and was, of course, desirable; but they added that they did not think it was of such importance that it would be worth while to petition for it. Such was the general import of the evidence adduced before the Committee of the Upper House. The evidence adduced before the Committee presided over by the noble Lord the Member for Lynn (Lord George Bentinck), was of similar import, and went to show that if the Legislature were to make the sacrifice of our shipping interests, and thereby of the main source of our national power, by abolishing all preference and protection to those interests, they would commit the folly of making the greatest possible sacrifice for the smallest possible good. It had been said that a petition from the House of Assembly in Jamaica had been presented to the House of Commons, which contained a strong remonstrance on the subject of the navigation laws; and of that petition the most had been made by those who advocated the measure now under consideration; but the history of the document in question required to be explained, and deserved to be more generally known than it was. It was a document of a very doubtful character. One of the members of the House of Assembly, Mr. Geddes, was examined before the Lords, and he at first declared that there was no such document in existence at all. He was mistaken, however. He was referred to dates, and he then found that there was such a document; but the evidence which he gave with respect to it, showed that it was of a very questionable character, and was not entitled to much consideration. His evidence was, that the petition had not been made the subject, as it ought to have been, of a preliminary inquiry before a Committee—that it passed the House at the close of a Session in a hurried manner, without being subjected to such formalities as documents of the kind were usually submitted to, and that that was the reason why it had entirely escaped his notice and that of many other Members. He begged, moreover, to call the attention of the House to this fact, that in the winter before this memorial was passed—he believed in December—there was a memorial transmitted to this country, containing a full account of all the grievances of which the colonists thought they had a right to complain. They were elaborately set forth, but not one word was said in that memorial of the navigation laws. More than that, subsequently, at the close of the next year, another memorial was prepared, setting forth all the grievances of the island. With that memorial Mr. Geddes was fully acquainted; and not one word was said in it about the navigation laws. Those memorials had passed through Committees of Inquiry. But it was only in this isolated memorial, which had not passed through a Committee of Inquiry, that the repeal of the navigation laws was mentioned. There was, moreover, a passage well deserving particular attention in this evidence of Mr. Geddes. He said—

> "These parties, if they had been aware of this fact, that, by the abrogation of the navigation laws, you would cheapen freights from the foreign islands (where sugar was brought) to England as well as from the West Indies, they never would have thought of asking for it."

To facilitate imports from Cuba by an alteration of the navigation laws, would only increase the disadvantage from which they were at present suffering. In short, the more the subject was carefully examined, the more the supposed advantages to our colonists from the abolition of the navigation laws would be found to vanish; and the more gratuitous the sacrifice of abandoning our present exclusive occupation of the carrying trade with our own foreign possessions: that trade he conceived to be of more essential importance to our maritime interests than the coasting trade of these islands, which it was proposed to reserve to our own shipping. On the contrary, if one only of these carrying trades was to be retained for the exclusive occupation of our own commercial navigation, he had little hesitation in declaring that he should prefer the reservation of the intercourse with the colonies; for, while neither America, nor any other country, could practically avail themselves, to any extent, of the opening of our home coasting trade to their ships, there were circumstances more especially affecting the former, which would expose our own shipping interests to the greatest disadvantage in a rivalry with them in the colonial traffic. He would not on this occasion enter into the details of that part of the question, nor touch upon any of the minor topics, such as the provisions relating to apprentices, or to Lascars, which were adverted to by the right hon. Gentleman. He would confine himself to the more general principles of this great question. And here he must first observe, that, however disposed to uphold the navigation laws, he (Mr. Herries) was not aware that there were any persons who were not prepared to enter fairly into a discussion of the subject, in order to remove all existing and real inconvenience by which trade and commerce might be unnecessarily fettered—from which the shipowners suffered injury—and from the removal of which no detriment could be apprehended to the great maritime interests of the country. But, to approach the subject with such views was very different from abandoning the great principle of the navigation laws. Having undertaken to make a Motion in which the necessity of adhering to "the great fundamental principle of the navigation laws" was asserted, he wished to explain what he meant when he used that expression. He would take his explanation from a statement made by the greatest and most recent authority, Mr. Huskisson, which embodied all that he understood by that expression:—

> "The fundamental principle of the navigation laws is that of giving by law in our foreign trade a preference to British shipping and British seamen, so far as we can do so consistently with our engagements and relations with other countries; and of confining our domestic trade, our coasting and colonial trade, as well as our fisheries, exclusively to ourselves."

He found Mr. Huskisson insisting in the strongest terms on this great principle. He said—

> "So far as exclusion is within our reach, that is, in the coasting trade, in the fisheries, in the trade between this country and our foreign possessions, we grant a strict monopoly to the British shipper. It is our duty to maintain and enforce this monopoly, not for his special advantage, but for the public interest. It is our further duty to give him every legitimate countenance and protection in the trade of this country with other maritime Powers."

And again, in the same speech, he said, "We are all agreed"—(he wished it could be said so now)—

> "we are all agreed that our commercial marine is the foundation of our naval supremacy, and that the maintenance of that power is the paramount duty of those who administer the affairs of this country."

If the right hon. Gentleman assented to those views, the House might go into Committee on that principle; they might in Committee pass a resolution modifying the law; they might remove anomalies which had been the object of censure and ridicule in some quarters where attention seemed to have been bestowed only on the smaller parts of the subject. The right hon. Gentleman had himself made use of some of these exceptional and occasionally inconvenient occurrences in the enforcement of the navigation laws, with very undue emphasis, as if they furnished important arguments against the principle of them. Such was his case of the cargo of nuts improperly sent to Hamburgh, and which could not be re-imported from thence; and such also was the affair of the cotton which, finding no sale at Havre, was interdicted from seeking a market here. These were matters of little weight and of small public general importance when put in comparison with the main objects of these great national laws; and it was not to be supposed that this House would accept them as motives of any material weight or value for the adoption of a resolution for abandoning a policy hitherto deemed essential to the maintenance of the commercial marine and maritime supremacy of this country. On this subject he appealed again to the authority of that liberal statesman, Mr. Huskisson, to whose opinions upon this topic he must continue to adhere, although he saw, and saw it with regret, that others who had also formerly acted cordially with him, had now abandoned his cautious and conservative view of this important question; and in this as well as other matters, had laid aside the caution which he had always shown in actual legislation, and the protective principle by which his practical measures were always characterised. Speaking of these laws, Mr. Huskisson said—

> "I am, however, at the same time bound to say that these regulations of the navigation laws were founded on the first and permanent law of every State, the highest ground of political necessity—the necessity of providing for our own state of defence; the necessity of being prepared to afford security to our various colonial possessions scattered throughout all seas; the necessity of protecting the different branches of our widely-spread commerce against all the dangers attendant on a state of war; and, lastly, the necessity of maintaining our naval ascendancy, and thereby sustaining the high station in the scale of nations which that ascendancy, more than anything else, has given to us. Entertaining these opinions, I am as ready as any man to say that it is our duty on all occasions to look to the peculiar nature of our State necessities, and that whenever the interests of commerce and navigation cannot be reconciled, I have no hesitation in stating that the interests of commerce should give way to those of navigation."

After all the attention he could bestow on the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, he was unable to discover by what chain of reasoning he arrived at the conclusion that we could abandon our protective maritime system without endangering our naval supremacy. Upon this main point—of all others the most essential in this question—he had been most sparing of his argument. He stated, indeed, that he agreed in holding that the commercial marine of this country was the main foundation of its maritime power; but if such was his opinion, he should have shown more clearly upon what grounds it was that he could take from that commercial marine the protection and fostering care which it had hitherto received, without at least endangering its progress and stability. He had not satisfied the House, and did not appear to have satisfied even himself upon that point. It would therefore become him or his Colleagues to offer more satisfactory explanations of their views in that respect. For his own part, he could not but concur with all who had looked at this subject with reference to its history from the earliest times, and conclude, that without the support, the protection, the fostering care, which had now for 200 years, by means of those Acts, been extended to their commercial marine, the interests connected with it must all be put to hazard. He would not go back to stories of the reigns of Richard II. and Elizabeth, or other reigns, to which the right hon. Gentleman had adverted. No doubt the absurd legislation of those early times afforded abundant materials for ridicule, and furnished nice pickings for those who would write a comic history of the navigation laws; but for any other purpose they were useless. But, beginning from the time of that ruler by whom they had been modelled anew, and whose great sagacity at least would not be denied, and tracing those laws as they existed under the monarchs who succeeded him, this fact was plainly seen, that successive Governments all held by those laws, as essential to the maintenance of the power, the commerce, and the industry of the country. To the present day there had been no variation from that policy; and when they turned from statesmen to philosophers, they found that the most eminent of these in the science of political economy, contrasting the special interests of trade with the mightier interests of national power and safety, and weighing the whole subject in his sagacious mind, had come to the conclusion that those very navigation laws which were now made a subject for amusing criticism and ready condemnation, were "the wisest of all our commercial regulations." From Oliver Cromwell, therefore, to the most eminent statesmen of the present day, and from Adam Smith to Mr. Huskisson, all authority, practical and theoretical, was in favour of these navigation laws. Surely much respect was due to such authorities; and those who, like the present Government, came forward, in defiance of these opinions, with a proposal to cast aside, without qualification, or only with the most paltry reservations, a system so upheld, and so interwoven with our national convictions, ought to give us some better security against the possible dangers of the change than the assurance of their own conviction that we might do so without danger; and with some better reason for it than a reference to the general principles of free trade, and a desire to give facilities to commerce. For his own part, there was no measure calculated to extend British commerce to which he was not willing to assent, if it could be shown that the advantages so to be secured could be obtained without incurring some national evil more than sufficient to counterbalance all the good which might be gained. He was not willing, upon any doubtful ground, to hazard the mighty interests involved in the naval superiority of this country. That superiority was indispensable for our own defence, and for the maintenance of our independence. It was inseparable from our insular position and our vast colonial possessions. The authority of England in the general affairs of the world depended also on her maritime authority. Strip her of that, and she would sink into a third or fourth-rate Power; her possessions abroad she could no longer maintain—her colonies she could no longer hold—her foreign dependencies would pass into other hands. She could retain none of these except as the mistress of the sea. Nor was it for herself alone that it was essential she should maintain that position. It was of infinite importance to the balance of power in Europe, and to the peace of the world, which, by her peculiar situation, and her predominant strength on an element where none could contend with her, she was frequently enabled by her sole intervention to uphold. Were they going to hazard all the advantages they enjoyed on the mere chance that the present measure might not produce the evils which had been foretold? These were all great national considerations, and undoubtedly presented themselves as the most weighty in approaching the subject now under discussion. But there were also extensive class interests involved in it which could not be overlooked, and which were of so large a character that they yielded only in importance to those which concerned the safety and honour of the whole nation. Such were the interests of the shipowner, the shipbuilder, the seaman, and all the trades connected with, and subservient to, the maritime profession. These had all been hitherto supported by a monopoly of certain branches of our trade, and a preference, so far as we could give it to them, in the remainder. Such, as Mr. Huskisson truly affirmed, it was our duty, and ought to be our care, to secure to them; and how could it be expected that these should be suddenly withdrawn from them without the certainty of immediate discouragement, and the hazard of permanent deterioration, to those interests? It appeared that the tonnage of the shipping belonging to this kingdom amounted to no less than about 3,900,000 tons; that the number of sailors employed in our mercantile marine was 230,000; it was also estimated that the capital embarked in shipping was little less than 40,000,000*l.*; and that the trades immediately connected with, and subservient to, the shipping interest, employed a capital of from 16,000,000*l.* to 17,000,000*l.* Thus there was between 50,000,000*l.* and 60,000,000*l.* of property, which would be immediately affected by the proposed change. There were also employed in this branch of national industry about 50,000 artisans, whose wages amounted to not less than 5,000,000*l.* a year. The cost of victualling the ships was estimated at 9,000,000*l.*, and the freights which the mercantile marine earned per annum were reckoned at nearly 30,000,000*l.* These were enormous interests, and should not be dealt with lightly; but when, in addition to all this, it was considered that the existence of these interests lay at the foundation of our national defences, and that without these defences we could not exist in the present position which we occupied as a nation, surely these afforded ample reasons, if not for resisting all change, at least for proceeding with such changes as were thought necessary—not in the reckless way which was now proposed—by at once adopting a sweeping resolution that the navigation laws should be wholly abolished, but by improving, altering, and modifying them in such a manner as might be found consistent with all the great interests which they were framed to foster and protect. If they must needs attempt amendments and modifications of these laws for objects of sufficient importance to justify the attempt, let it at least be made with all the care and caution, and deliberate prudence, which the magnitude of the possible results, for good or evil, unquestionably demanded. Let there be ample time given, not only for this House, but for the whole country, and for all parties specially concerned in the issue, to form and express their opinions upon the proposed sweeping measure. There existed no emergency in this case requiring immediate or hasty legislation. It was a question of prospective amendment only, even in the eyes of those who conceived the most favourable view of its ultimate advantage. It was one of great danger in the opinion of others. It was therefore, of all others, a subject the most requiring a cautious and deliberate mode of proceeding. For the Government to contend that after a delay of six months between the announcement and the production of this measure, that it should be hastily urged into practical legislation, was utterly preposterous. They could hardly themselves expect it. Prepared as he himself was to reject the proposition, as it then stood, at once upon the merits of the case, he must further declare that no efforts on his part should be wanting to prevent undue haste and precipitancy in the progress of it, if persisted in. He would take the liberty of telling Her Majesty's Ministers what course they ought to have adopted in a matter of such vast interest and importance as this. They ought, without delay, after the announcement of it in the Speech from the Throne, to have laid their plan upon the table of the House, and there have left it for long and ample consideration. They must be presumed to have come to some determination respecting such a measure, before they made that announcement. If so, they ought surely not to have locked it up within their own bosoms for six months, in order to produce it towards the close of the Session, and then to call upon the Legislature precipitately to adopt it. He had not gone into any details of the subject on this occasion; having only slightly alluded to the marvellous anomaly of retaining the obligation on the shipowner to man his vessel as prescribed by the existing laws, while he was to be deprived of the advantages in consideration of which that burdensome condition was imposed upon him. But that part of the plan was insisted upon in the speech with which it was introduced; and the House was to take the declaration in the speech as a part of the measure. In conclusion, he begged to state that he opposed the whole resolution as it stood, on the ground that it professed to be destructive of the navigation laws; and for that reason he had thought it necessary to put his opinion in a distinct shape, affirming the converse of the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman, and he hoped the House would concur in it. Considering the peculiar disadvantages to which the shipowner of this country was exposed, connected as they were with the social and political condition and the public economy of the country itself, he knew it to be impossible for him to sanction an unreserved competition with the foreigner, and to maintain the seamen he employed in his present state of proud superiority over the same class in all other nations. He knew it would be impossible for him without the aid of efficient protection to uphold his high position as the main instrument of the power and glory of this great country; and, therefore, for the sake of all those interests which depended upon that power—our own safety and independence—our great colonial possessions—and even the general peace and tranquillity of the world; he prayed the House not to assent to an experimental change which might impair the strength of that right arm which this nation had hitherto put forth to awe and control the world, and convert it into a palsied limb which the meanest of our rivals might successfully grapple with. The right hon. Gentleman concluded by moving the resolution given at the commencement of his speech.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said, that when he introduced the question to the House the other night, he had an opportunity of so fully explaining the grounds upon which he was prepared to support it, that he was unwilling to present himself again to the notice of the House so soon; but he assured them that he would confine the remarks which he was compelled to make within the briefest possible compass. He was not at all disposed to quarrel with the course which the right hon. Gentleman had taken. On the contrary, he thought that the resolution which the right hon. Gentleman had placed in the hands of the Speaker, very fairly raised the issue which the House must decide before they considered the details of the proposition which Her Majesty's Government had submitted to them. That issue he conceived to be this—whether they should widely depart from those principles which had hitherto been considered as essential and fundamental principles of the navigation laws, or whether, adhering to them, they should endeavour to reconcile that adherence with some partial deviation from them, in order to meet certain particular grievances? The House would do him the justice to recollect that when he proposed the question to the House, he did not attempt to conceal from them that he was proposing an innovation of a very large description, and that he was dealing with a subject of immense magnitude. To have attempted to take any other course would have been alike unworthy and useless. He would not have done so if he could, and he could not have done so if he would. Having made up his mind that a great alteration was necessary for the general benefit of the country, and above all for the benefit of our commercial marine, and for the military greatness of the country, he thought it right fairly to state to the House that he was proposing a novel course—a course at variance with the general tenor of legislation which the House had heretofore pursued. He had listened with the greatest attention to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, whose great knowledge and long experience upon such subjects at all times commanded his best attention; but he must say, that although he clearly understood him to say that he objected to the course proposed by Her Majesty's Government, he confessed he had failed to carry away so distinct an impression of what were the views really entertained by him, as—whether agreeing with him or not—he generally derived from statements made by the right hon. Gentleman. In fact, the right hon. Gentleman's speech was exceedingly vague on the whole subject. In some parts of his speech he would have led them to suppose, that if foreign countries would meet us on a footing of fair reciprocity, there was hardly any part of the restrictions which he was not prepared to abandon—while in other parts of his speech the right hon. Gentleman would have led them to believe that he would rigidly adhere to the principles of restriction, although he might be prepared to consider some partial or secondary modification of them. The only thing he had very distinctly collected from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman was that at all events he was not prepared to relax the restrictions placed upon the navigation and trade of our colonial possessions. He would retain them as a strict monopoly; and he quoted the authority of Mr. Huskisson upon that point. Now, no man could respect the memory of Mr. Huskisson more than he (Mr. Labouchere) did; but he might be permitted to doubt whether, in the position in which we were now placed—it having been the declared policy of the Legislature to deprive the produce of our colonies of that preference and protection in the markets of the mother country which they had hitherto received—he might be permitted to doubt whether, in such circumstances, Mr. Huskisson would have defended the monstrous proposition, that while we had adopted this policy we should at the same time insist upon retaining what Burke called 'the paper chains' which bound the colonies to the mother country. He did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman was an advocate for reversing the policy of the Legislature in this respect, and for returning to the system of protecting duties upon the produce of our colonies, and upon articles the manufacture of our own country. The right hon. Gentleman had not given them the least inkling of what his opinion was on this point; and yet it did seem to him to constitute a very material consideration when discussing the question as to whether or not they should introduce other alterations in consequence of that change of policy. Judging from the political society in which he saw the right hon. Gentleman, he concluded he would, if he could, recommend to the House to revert to the system of high protecting duties upon the produce of our colonies and of the mother country; but he should be very much surprised indeed, although holding these abstract opinions, to find one so sagacious as the right hon. Gentleman imagining that in the long run it was possible to restore that system. He was aware that much stress was laid upon the recommendations of a certain report which the noble Lord opposite had presented that night. That report, doubtless, afforded great joy to those who held protection principles. But what did it recommend? On the special ground of the condition of the West Indies, it proposed that for six years, and no more, there should be a protecting duty of 10*s.* in favour of sugar alone the produce of our colonial possessions. The right hon. Gentleman in dealing with this part of the subject, quoted the evidence of a Member of the Jamaica House of Assembly, who was examined before the Committee of the House of Lords, and who admitted that it was true a very strong memorial had been sent by that Assembly protesting against the navigation laws, and asking Parliament to abrogate them, but who said that he knew nothing of its having passed; that it was brought forward at a late period of the Session, and that it had come with surprise upon the House of Assembly. He could neither confirm nor refute that statement; but he apprehended that the right hon. Gentleman was hardly prepared to say, unless the same trick was played all over the island, that the memorial of the planters, merchants, labourers, and others of Hanover, Jamaica, did not represent the opinions of those who had sent it to this country. Their statement was, that British shipowners, under the navigation laws, compel parties to pay double the amount for freights that they would pay if they shipped their produce in other vessels, and that a great number of American ships leave the island in ballast, which would otherwise carry away a large amount of the produce of the colony. He would also remind the House of the statements on former occasions made by Lord Harris, the Governor of Trinidad, in which he strongly urged on the mother country the relaxation of the navigation laws as a boon to which the West Indies were entitled, and stated as a fact that those very restrictions had operated recently in raising the freight of imported immigrants into the West Indies. He was ashamed to waste the time of the House in arguing at any length the proposition that the navigation laws were a burden and a grievance to our colonies. It stood to reason that it must be so. Any one who was acquainted with the history of the colonies must know that the colonists had at all times complained of those laws; and was it possible that they could bear the burden without complaint now that this country had announced her intention of depriving them of those advantages they had heretofore possessed? It was true that some West Indians who were brought before the Committees both of the House of Lords and House of Commons treated this question of the navigation laws very lightly; but he thought it was not very difficult to discover what had been the sources of those variations of opinion. The fact was, that the West Indians, somehow or other, believed that gentlemen who were generally attached to protective duties would express a stronger opinion upon the navigation laws, from the circumstance of those laws being mixed up with protective duties, than they would if they considered them only as an abstract question. The right hon. Gentleman had dwelt upon the case of Jamaica; but he took good care not to say anything about Canada. Could there be a more explicit declaration than the joint memorial that proceeded from the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council of that colony, agreed to, he believed, unanimously, declaring that the navigation laws were an intolerable burden to the people of Canada, diverting the trade naturally belonging to that colony through the United States, and asking for relief from them? He would not again read Lord Elgin's admirable despatch, in which he said that on commercial grounds, as well as on political considerations, he thought it highly important such a grievance should not be left to rankle in the minds of the colonists of Canada. Thus much on the question of commercial restriction, which he acknowledged was one of the fundamental principles of the navigation laws; but there was another essential principle of our navigation laws which the right hon. Gentleman was so much alarmed at the prospect of repealing, and that principle was that which endeavoured to restrict to ourselves the carrying trade between us and other countries. He would not go again over the ground he had taken when he first brought forward this question; but the right hon. Gentleman had not attempted to prove that we could derive any advantage by keeping the carrying trade to ourselves, or that we should not utterly fail in that struggle if we engaged in it with other countries. The right hon. Gentleman, however, had sneered very much at the value of the Prussian trade; but Prussia had given the signal, and other countries had followed the example. The right hon. Gentleman, looking to the Prussian trade, said it did not become England to succumb to anything like a menace from that quarter; but the question for us to consider was whether the thing was just or unjust. Prussia had told us fairly that she could not, consistently with the feelings of her own people and her own interests, enter into trade with us unless upon equal terms, but that she would then be ready to do so. My own opinion is, that by meeting her on equal terms, she will be ready to trade with us; and the right hon. Gentleman, in part of his speech, seemed to me to be perfectly willing, if he could get equal terms, to meet any country that chose to meet us upon those terms. All that Prussia asked for was, that in the European carrying trade, her ships and ours might be placed precisely on the same footing. [Mr. HERRIES: She wants the colonial trade.] No; that was not the point in dispute between them, though he thought they might give her the colonies. The point was, that Prussia asked that her ships might have the same facilities with regard to the European carrying trade that we gave to our own ships; but that could not be done without giving up the main principle of our navigation laws. That, however, was a principle which it was not worth contending for, for they might depend upon it that we could not continue to deal with the rest of the world upon a system of inequality—they would not allow us to maintain privileges and immunities which we were not willing to extend to others. The question was, whether we could now enter into a war of retaliation? His own firm conviction was, that we had a deep interest in accepting the terms they offer us frankly and fairly. He utterly denied the position of the right hon. Gentleman, that British shipping could not compete with that of any nation in the world. If he believed that British shipping could not be as well navigated as that of any other nation upon the terms of free and open competition, he should tremble for this country—he should think that our maritime greatness was undermined, and that no restriction we could devise could maintain it—that our commercial greatness would dwindle away—and that our maritime greatness, which was so intimately connected with it, must also share in its ruin. But he could discover no reason in the world for coming to such a conclusion. The right hon. Gentleman had talked about the United States of America, and said it was notorious that their shipping beat ours wherever they met it. That he utterly denied. How stood the facts of the case in trade generally, if they took the trade between the United States and England? First of all he would state to the House what had been the progress of those two great countries with regard to shipping during the last few years, and then the House would see to what degree the United States had been able to overwhelm and crush our marine in the competition in which it was engaged. He found that in 1827 the American shipping amounted to 1,620,607 tons, and in 1846 to 2,562,084; having increased between 1827 and 1846, 941,477 tons; whilst in 1827 the British shipping amounted to 2,460,500 tons, and in 1846 to 3,817,112 tons, being an increase in the same period of 1,365,612 tons. The difference, then, between the increase of British shipping, as compared with that of American shipping for the same period, was 415,135 tons, or 44 per cent.; and, comparing the direct trade between Great Britain and the United States—a trade obviously open and unprotected for the two countries with each other, and computed on fair terms—he found that between 1824 and 1846 the amount of shipping had increased from 45,000 tons to 205,000 tons; and if they took the general trade of Great Britain with the United States, the increase was still more remarkable; for in 1824 there were only 54,600 tons of British shipping engaged in the American trade, whereas in 1844 there were 766,700 tons. That would show that under the pressure of that competition which was described as so overwhelming, the increase in our shipping in that trade in which it had to compete with American shipping, and enjoyed no protection at all, had been enormous in the course of the last few years; and he would remark in passing, to those Gentlemen whose apprehensions directed them not to look at America, but at Sweden, Denmark, and Prussia, that if it were shown that we could compete with the shipping of the United States, we need have no apprehensions but that we could also compete with the shipping of Prussia, Sweden, and Denmark. The third principle of the navigation laws, as he apprehended, was to secure to us what was called the long-voyage trade, so as to prevent goods coming from Asia, Africa, or America from being imported into this country from any European port. He thought, from something that fell from the right hon. Gentleman, that he was not unprepared to give up what had hitherto been considered as one of the main principles of the navigation laws. It was, however, most desirable that the interval between the proposal of a measure of this description, and proceeding with it, should not be longer than was required for the full consideration of the subject; and he had been much struck by an observation that had fallen from an hon. Gentleman opposite, the worthy Alderman the Member for Westmoreland, one of the most decided as well as well as one of the ablest opponents of the measure when he (Mr. Labouchere) had had the honour of bringing it forward. That hon. Gentleman had said on a former occasion—

> "Do not suppose I am fighting for delay; nothing is further from my purpose. I know too well what is the real interest of those whose cause I am defending; and nothing should I regret more than that this question should be brought before Parliament, and that Parliament should not decide 'aye' or 'no' upon it. I know the evil of delay. It paralyses trade; and therefore, opposed as I am to the measure you have brought forward, depend upon it I will be no party to obstructing or preventing Parliament from fairly considering and definitely deciding upon it."

He thought there was great good sense in that remark of the hon. Member; and he trusted that it would be followed by those who acted with the hon. Member in opposing this measure, and that it might not be obstructed by delay, which was most injurious to the great interests which were involved in this question. He was altogether unwilling, upon that occasion, to enter into any of the details of that measure, aware, as he was, that they could best be considered in Committee when the measure of the Government was before the House in the shape of a Bill. He should, therefore, refrain from going into those details, or even from discussing that question of manning which the right hon. Gentleman had adverted to. He would not, he said, enter into the last point further than this—that he supposed the right hon. Gentleman was not prepared to say that every ship, by merely mounting a British flag at the masthead, having a British owner, but not being British built or British manned, could be considered a British vessel. There must be some regulation on that point; but he would not then enter into a controversy with the right hon. Gentleman upon that question of detail. Even in the United States the right hon. Gentleman knew very well that two-thirds of a ship's crew must be American citizens, and that to be an American citizen a person must have resided five years in the United States; whilst of British ships three-fourths of the crew must be British citizens: but he thought that all these matters were infinitely better considered when the Bill was before the House. The real point for the House to decide that evening was fairly raised by the resolution of the right hon. Gentleman. Would they be contented with patchwork legislation? Was it right to maintain the principles of the navigation laws? The first principle was that of colonial monopoly; the second was the maintenance of those restrictions which were intended to secure the long-voyage trade to this country; and the third was the maintenance of those restrictions which were intended to secure the European carrying trade. The question was, were they prepared to consider the propriety of departing from those principles, or leaving them untouched — whether they should meet the wants of commerce and the exigencies of the case before them—whether they were prepared thoroughly and completely to revise the whole system of our navigation laws, with the view of adapting them to the spirit of the times and meeting the just demands of other countries, the wishes of our own colonies, and the interests of our expanding trade? He believed that that was really the question before the House. He had never sought to disguise from the House the magnitude of the question. It was to be considered in all its details, and was fairly raised by the right hon. Gentleman. Of course, if the right hon. Gentleman carried his proposal, it would be fatal to the measure of the Government; and he should regret it, because he believed that, for all the interests of this country, and more especially the mercantile and maritime interests, the time was come when, after having made such great alterations in our commercial system, they should look at the navigation laws—that they should grapple with the whole system, and not have any piecemeal legislation, but should adapt them to the policy which they had lately pursued. If he believed that the honour of England would be affected by the measure he proposed—if he believed that it would have the effect of crippling the maritime greatness of this country—he would rather cut off his right hand than place upon the table the resolution of which he had given notice; but he was convinced that this alteration was necessary for our commercial and maritime greatness, and in his mind he could not separate the one from the other. He could not conceive that a contingency could arise, such as that this country, with its seafaring population, its abundant harbours, the genius of its people, long inured to navigation and commerce, and its expanding trade, could dwindle away from the maritime greatness it had hitherto maintained. If we could not compete with other nations in shipbuilding, then there was nothing which we could compete with them in, and in all that pertained to the sea the doom of this country was sealed. He held that any apprehension would be justifiable rather than that upon that element where the character of England had so long been eminent, she should dwindle away to a second-rate Power, as long as we took care not to dry up the sources of the industry of our people, the energy of our commerce, and the freedom of our navigation and trade. These were the real foundations of British greatness; and they might depend upon it that as long as they could preserve these, with tranquillity at home and abroad, as long as commerce and the liberties of this country were maintained, there was no fear for our maritime greatness. The right hon. Gentleman, with all his ingenuity, had failed to show any reason for apprehending that that greatness was declining; and he was sure the right hon. Gentleman would not have contented himself with vague generalities as he had done, if he could have adduced any facts or arguments to show that his apprehensions were well founded. He would not, however, detain the House longer. The details would be better considered in Committee, and he had therefore contented himself with stating the reasons why he thought the House should not agree to the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman, but, on the contrary, ought to allow the Bill to be introduced and fairly considered.

Alderman THOMPSON said, the House would readily agree with the right hon. Gentleman when he stated that he did not propose any piece of patchwork legislation, because the right hon. Gentleman proposed to sweep from the Statute-book the whole of the navigation laws, except those which had reference to the coasting trade, where foreigners could hardly desire to compete with our shipping. The importance of the subject could hardly be overrated; for it was, in truth, one of the greatest national questions which had been discussed in modern times. He had no interest whatever in shipping; nor did he represent a constituency in the slightest degree concerned in it. If the object of the right hon. Gentleman in proposing the repeal of the navigation laws was to reduce freights, there was not one individual who would benefit more than himself, because there probably was not one who gave more employment to shipping. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Labouchere) said, that if we could compete with the United States of America, we could also compete with the ships of the northern ports of Europe. But if he looked to the evidence taken before the Committee last year, he would find that the ships of the north of Europe were not only manned and sailed at a much lower cost than our own, but that the original cost of these ships was also very much less than in the case of vessels built in the United States and in Great Britain. The right hon. Gentleman complained that his right hon. Friend had not been explicit in stating what alterations he would agree to in the navigation laws. He (Alderman Thompson) would not hesitate to state for himself that there were modifications to which he would consent, and he would state what they were. He would maintain to the fullest extent the fundamental principles of the navigation laws; but there was some of the produce of America, and of Africa especially, which might be introduced with advantage into our home consumption, and brought into the ports of Europe by ships of any nation. He meant such articles as would be beneficial to the manufacturing interests of England; but he was not prepared to say that bulky articles should be so admitted. He did not find that shipowners were agreed in opinion as to the restrictions which compelled the produce of Europe, Asia, and Africa to be brought by ships of this country. As to the offers made to this country by the United States, the representative of the United States in this country offered to concede a little if England would concede a little, and to concede much if England would concede much. But, in point of fact, America could concede very little to England; for although American shipping had increased in a very great ratio, he believed the right hon. Gentleman was wrong in his statement of the business carried on between the United Kingdom and the United States. He (Alderman Thompson) spoke from recollection merely; but his memory must be greatly at fault if it were not the fact that two-thirds of the

American trade was carried on by American ships, and one-third in British bottoms. They had heard much about English navigation and English commerce; but those arrangements would be prejudicial to both. The right hon. Gentleman said, that the effect would be to promote the commerce of the country. They would find that the Americans were our great competitors in the China market, especially in cotton goods. They would find that the British merchant was greatly limited by the difficulty of getting a return cargo. But the Americans would send their ships with cargoes to China, and in return they would take tea, the natural export of the country, and that tea would be brought to the United Kingdom, the chief market for it (the Americans not being a tea-consuming people), thereby displacing to that extent the export of so much British manufacture. He said that America was not a tea-consuming country. The quantity annually consumed in America was only 15,000,000 lbs., whilst there were about 45,000,000 lbs. annually imported into this country. But again, from Cuba, Brazil, and Porto Rico, nearly the whole trade of which was in sugar—and the law now allowing slave-grown sugar to compete with free-grown—the Americans, who had the supplying of those countries with lumber and provisions, would bring their sugars into the British markets. They would take American cottons in those countries, and would bring their sugars to England, whilst our ships would come home in ballast. The British shipowners could no more compete with the Americans in South America than they could in China. And the noble Lord behind him reminded him that the Americans supplied lumber, provisions, and corn to the West India islands; and they could, and no doubt they would, bring cargoes away in return. But that was said to be a great advantage to the West Indies. Suppose they could bring Jamaica sugar at 10*s.* a ton cheaper than at present, what advantage would it be to the consumer? Was it worth while for so comparatively trifling an amount as a quarter of a farthing a pound, to make such an alteration for the consumer's benefit? As to the East Indian produce—sugar, or anything else—brought hither by American ships, the most they expected to save was about one farthing a pound. Did that justify these changes? And as to the concessions to be made to Prussia, he should like to know if they had not already made great concessions? We had reduced the duty on Prussian timber from 55*s.* a load to 15*s.* a load; and in February next, the corn of that country would be admitted free of duty into our ports. What advantage had we gained in return? Prussia had been more stringent in its commercial regulations since 1846 than it had been before. We had admitted the cotton of America, and were about to admit her corn; but every article of British produce was taxed from 20 to 30 per cent in that country. The right hon. Gentleman stated the other night that Holland had set the example of a liberal policy in her navigation laws in other days, and that her commercial marine had risen in consequence to an immense magnitude and importance, while England had followed a restrictive policy in her navigation laws. It did not appear very liberal on the part of Holland when, after concluding a treaty with her, we were prevented from trading with the Dutch colonies. The right hon. Gentleman said, that if Parliament adopted the measure now proposed, every country was to have the benefit of these changes, unless the Queen by an Order in Council should otherwise direct. Now, how would the Government act with respect to Holland, and with respect to the great colony of Java? He had a table which showed the different export duty levied in Java upon produce in Dutch and British ships:—

Produce	by Dutch Ships. Rupees.	By British. Rupees.
Coffee.—Export duty per picul of 134 lb.	2	4
Sugar.—Free of duty		6 per cent.
Tin.—Export duty per picul	2	4
Pepper.— do.	1	2
Nutmegs.— do.	9½	19
Mace.— do.	10	20

Tonnage duty, 10*d.* per ton (Dutch), 20*d.* per ton (British).

No fewer than 300 Dutch vessels were engaged in the Java trade, of the average burden of 600 tons, many of them varying from 800 to 1,200 tons. Under the proposed change in the law, he should like to know how the right hon. Gentleman proposed to deal with the Dutch in respect of this trade? With respect to manning the Royal Navy, it appeared to him that the right hon. Gentleman had placed very great importance upon the evidence of a single gallant officer, Sir James Stirling, who was examined before the Select Committee on the 13th of May, 1847. He must be permitted to express his opinion, that the scheme of this gallant officer was of an

Utopian character, for whilst he admitted the difficulty of arriving at a satisfactory decision upon the question of what would be the effect upon the Navy if the navigation laws were repealed, he said he would train up a race of seamen exclusively for the Navy, a race totally unconnected with, and irrespective of, the commercial marine. In order to be prepared for the exigencies of war, this gallant officer's plan was to keep up a large peace establishment—about 120,000 men in time of peace. He should like to know what would be the sentiments of the hon. Member for Montrose, and, indeed, of the House itself, when they were asked for the annual vote for the wages of 120,000 seamen in the time of peace? We had now had thirty-three years of peace. Would the hon. Member for Montrose consent to maintain a system like that? There was something, however, still more peculiar in the evidence of Sir J. Stirling; and the answers to two questions, which he would venture to read, would confirm his view of it:—

> "Sir James was asked, 'Do you consider that the repeal of the navigation laws would be accompanied with any danger to the maritime defences of this country?' The answer was: 'I am scarcely prepared to reply positively to that question; my own conclusion upon the subject of the Navigation Act is, that it has not the effect it was intended to have; that it does not, in fact, promote the prosperity of the shipping interest; and, consequently, entertaining that notion, I conceive that its abolition would not be injurious to the maritime power of the country; at the same time, the question is of so general a nature, and would require to be answered with reference to such a variety of facts, which I have not at present in my memory, that I would rather be permitted to decline giving a positive answer to that particular point, unless I may be allowed to state it as mere opinion, unsupported by the facts to which I refer.'"

An hon. and gallant Friend of his (Mr. Alderman Thompson's), no longer a Member of the House, Sir Howard Douglas, a man whose professional character stood upon the highest eminence, put the following very pertinent question to the gallant officer:—

> "'Would you, in commanding a ship or a fleet during a war, with a mixed crew of foreigners and British, go into action with as much confidence of success against an equal, as if your vessel were exclusively manned with British seamen?' Mark the answer:—'No. I can illustrate that by a case which happened to myself at the breaking out of the last war. I commanded a sloop of war; we were in the presence of the enemy, and expected to engage, when nine men came to me and said they were Americans, and declined to fight against their own country. It was exceedingly inconvenient at the moment. I had no alternative but to admit their claim, because it appeared upon the books that they had been impressed as American subjects, and I could only put them upon the booms, where I could see that they did not do any mischief, but I could not make them otherwise useful.'"

If, then, as he believed, the number of British seamen was to be diminished by a diminution in the number of British ships, would it not be utterly impossible to man the Navy? Must we not, in that case, have recourse to foreigners—to Prussians, Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes, in order that the case put by Sir James Stirling might be met? It had been shown to demonstration, that about two-fifths of the seamen employed in the British Navy had belonged to the merchant service; and he had had an opportunity of seeing a gallant Admiral (Sir C. Napier) now commanding one of Her Majesty's fleets, to whom he had put this question:—

> "'Pray who have you for sailing-masters now in the Navy?' 'Who have we?' was the reply—'Of course we have men from the merchant service; and we have nobody else that knows the coast, and can bring our ships into port.'"

This was a circumstance that ought not to be lost sight of in any discussion upon this important question. He considered, then, the evidence of Sir J. Stirling to be practically unsupported, in proof of which he might state, that naval officers of the highest rank in her Majesty's service were ready and willing to be called in, who would have stated to the Committee, that any great alteration in the navigation laws must impair the efficiency of the Navy, and consequently the power of this country. Evidence of this character had been given, he believed, before the Lords' Committee now sitting, and he hoped it would receive the attention which the importance of the subject required. There was another point to which he desired to direct the consideration of the House. Ships built out of this country, but bought by British subjects, were to be entitled to a British register; but the right hon. Gentleman said further, that every British registered vessel engaged in foreign trade was to be manned with a crew of whom three-fourths were to be British seamen. He apprehended the right hon. Gentleman would experience some difficulty in the working of these principles. If he went to Archangel, and worked his ship in foreign trade from thence, he would not thank the right hon. Gentleman for a British register. Where indeed would be the use of it when he could employ his vessel in the colonial trade—in the trade to America, China, and India? The whole value of the British register was gone if the right hon. Gentleman's plan was adopted. He might be a shipowner either as an Englishman or as a foreigner; and if he manned his ship with Swedes or Norwegians, he could carry on his trade more profitably than under a British register. In fact, the right hon. Gentleman's plan completely failed the moment he declared he did not intend to reduce the number of British seamen in ships having British register, and that it should remain at the point now required by the law. He repeated, then, that the plan was impracticable, because, if he employed his ship abroad, he did not want a British register. The British register, therefore, became of no use, except to vessels engaged in the coasting trade; but ships of 500, or 600, or 800 tons, were not wanted in the coasting trade. They were required in the long voyages—in the trade with India, China, America, and the colonies. Perhaps he had no reason to complain of the intended change in that respect. It was, however, an inconsistency, aggravated in some degree by injustice. Why was an English shipowner, who was now compelled to man his vessel with a certain proportion of British seamen, not to have liberty to take as many foreign seamen as he might require? Why were restrictions to be placed on him above all individuals in the community? The House had been legislating for the last year or two for the establishment of free trade; yet, strange to say, they were now asked, by this measure, to establish restrictions of the most repugnant character. He did not agree with those who would repeal the Reciprocity Acts, for he had supported Mr. Huskisson in many of those measures; but what had been their effect upon the tonnage of this country? The first treaty was concluded with Prussia in the year 1824, and the following was the result:—

	British tons.	Prussian tons.
In 1824 the tonnage of ships entering the United Kingdom from Prussian ports was	94,664	151,621
In the year 1845 it was	49,334	256,611
Showing a decrease in British tonnage of	45,330	
And an increase in Prussian tonnage of		104,990

With regard to Sweden and Norway, the account stood thus:—

	British tons.	S. and N. tons.
In 1825, Swedish and Norwegian ships were placed in reciprocity, and the tonnage for that year was . . .	28,493	175,364
In 1845 it was . .	16,372	219,820
Showing a decrease in British tonnage of	12,121	
But an increase in Swedish and Norwegian tonnage of		44,456

As to Denmark, the statement was as follows:—

	British tons.	Danish tons.
In June, 1824, the reciprocity treaty was concluded, and in year the inward entries were . . .	6,738	23,689
In 1845 they were .	4,528	84,566
Showing a decrease in British tonnage of	2,210	
But an increase in Danish tonnage of		60,877

With regard to Russia, no reciprocity treaty was concluded with that country till the year 1843; and in 1843 and 1845, the inward entries stood thus:—

	British tons.	Russian tons.
In 1843	314,682	47,883
In 1845	380,684	75,678
Showing an increase of	66,002 and on 314,682 tons.	27,795 on 47,883 tons.

He left these facts to speak for themselves. Another circumstance had to be remembered in conjunction with them. In the year 1844, the Merchant Seamen's Act was passed, the preamble of which alleged the expediency of increasing the number of seamen, and for that purpose of affording them all due encouragement and protection. By this Act, the shipowner, or rather the captain, was liable to punishment as for a misdemeanour if he did not provide, to the satisfaction of the authorities, provisions for the ship, suitable both in quantity and quality. The owner of a foreign ship, whoever he might be, was not liable to this responsibility; he might therefore provide his ship with stock fish and black bread in the place of good fish and wheaten bread. Under all the circumstances, he was convinced that the best course for the House to take, would be to adopt the resolution proposed by his right hon. Friend; and when they had arrived in Committee, let them make those alterations in the law which would be found to work conveniently both for the commerce and for the Navy of this country. But he implored the House not to abrogate the principles of a law which had essentially contributed to the safety and security of the British empire.

Dr. BOWRING said, the worthy Alderman, like indeed every hon. Member who had spoken on the same side of the question, had made a very important concession, namely, that apart from the interests of the shipowners, the consuming community would be greatly benefited by the change in the laws, because he, with the other hon. Members, admitted that there would be a considerable reduction in the freight, and if so, there must be a proportionate reduction in the cost of the articles conveyed by ships. The worthy Alderman no doubt very properly attacked many countries that had not, as yet, adopted that wise change in the commercial system which we had lately legalised, and which the spirit of these times so loudly demanded. But he (Dr. Bowring) contended that in this question we were not to inquire into what other nations were doing; we were not to inquire whether other Governments were wisely or unwisely discharging the duties which were committed to their charge. All that we had to do was, to ascertain what were the best means for developing those immense resources which this country was allowed to possess. And he thought it really a disgraceful confession on the part of any one interested in the shipping interest of this country to aver, that with such a superfluity of capital and its consequent supply on such cheap terms, with such activity of intellect, with such large colonial possessions, with aptitudes of such varied character, with raw materials cheaper than in almost any other nation of the earth—still, with all these preponderating advantages, we should not be able to struggle with any other competing naval Power. If we could not compete, there must be some fault in our system; if, as the worthy Alderman himself (Mr. Alderman Thompson) had acknowledged, we could not meet successfully Norway, Sweden, or any of those other northern Powers, after all our long experience, and with all our great advantages, then there must be something in the legislation itself under which we lived which demanded an immediate change. Reference had been made again and again to that country upon the progress and augmentation of whose shipping we looked with the greatest alarm. He alluded to the shipping of the United States. The worthy Alderman had stated as a fact of which there could be no doubt that the proportion of the shipping of Great Britain and the United States had been on the average about three to two in their favour. But that proportion was very much the same as had existed for the last thirty years. There had been certain periods, no doubt, in which the proportion of English shipping had been considerably greater. It never was greater than in the year 1847, for he observed that of 100 tons entered in 1847, nearly 60 were foreign and 40 British; whilst in the year 1820, twenty-seven years ago, the proportion of British to American shipping was as 16 to 84. With regard to the clearances in 1847, of 100 tons, there were 43 British and 57 American. The proportion, therefore, instead of being as two to three, as had been represented by the worthy Alderman, was in fact as four to five. The returns which had been laid upon the table of the House proved that, notwithstanding the severe difficulties with which the country had had to contend, the proportion which existed many years ago had still been maintained. He durst say there was scarcely any hon. Member to whom a certain document had not been sent—a letter addressed to Mr. G. F. Young, a very distinguished and zealous advocate of the navigation laws, by an eminent merchant of Calcutta. A cause must indeed be desperate that had no better arguments than those which were prominently put forth in that letter. Of course the questions were put forward with some ingenuity, for the purpose of obtaining answers suitable to those by whom they were put. The first inquiry was, whether any practical inconvenience had ever been experienced from the navigation laws by the party questioned; and to that the answer was "Quite the contrary." And yet it was rather singular that in this very document there was abundance of evidence to show that, on many occasions, freights could have been obtained much cheaper in a foreign than in an English vessel; and the reason put forward for the answer, "Quite the contrary," was that, during the last few years, freights had been so low as to be scarcely remunerative to the British owners. It was no inconvenience then, no injury, but "quite the contrary," to be obliged to pay for any service more than its current value. But why was the House to legislate merely for the benefit of the British shipowner? There was a personage that might be represented in the abstract as the consumer (who was everybody), who represented the common and universal interests of the people; and it appeared to him (Dr. Bowring) that it was precisely that common, universal, and national interest which in these discussions they were so apt to forget. The hon. and learned Gentleman then proceeded to advert to the evidence given before the Lords' Committee on this question, by Mr. Joshua Wilson, against the navigation laws, and which evidence, he contended, was not counterbalanced by any means, still less overweighed by the evidence given in favour of the existing laws. As a representative of a humble, poor, but laborious constituency, he (Dr. Bowring) insisted upon it that the price of their goods should not be enhanced for the purpose of giving an undue preference to some wealthy shipowners. All that they were struggling for was this, that the English artisan should be denied more of the advantages which were possessed by his foreign competitor—that he should have the advantage of cheap communication for what he bought and for what he sold—that laws should not interfere with his comforts and his profits. The grievance was, that, in consequence of the present navigation laws, the people of this country were made to pay a higher price for articles of necessary consumption than they could obtain them for, if they were allowed to be introduced into the English ports in foreign vessels, upon the same conditions as British vessels, and such a grievance as that ought to be at once removed; and on the other hand that they might be able to send their manufactures to any country at the lowest rate at which they could be conveyed. Reference had been made again and again to the opinions of Adam Smith, and great importance had been attached to his declaration that there were various considerations which rendered it essential to our prosperity that the navigation laws should be maintained. For one he (Dr. Bowring) was very willing to recognise the authority of Adam Smith on commercial and politico-economical matters; but Adam Smith was not an authority on the very different topic of the national defences. He certainly should not go to his pages to study how men should be best provided for the Navy or the Army. That was a point on which he should think the authority of Adam Smith was of exceedingly little value. But for what had our legislation been struggling for so many ages? What had they been endeavouring to procure Session after Session? To provide cheap carriage and cheap conveyance for the people. The importance of economical and rapid communication was recognised in every step of their legislation. They had applied hundreds and hundreds of millions for the accomplishment of that object. First they began by passing Bills for the formation of canals. Well, no doubt those who had interests in the old turnpike roads very much opposed the introduction of canals. These parties had what the French called *droit acquis;* they had an interest recognised by Act of Parliament. But still, notwithstanding their opposition, the Legislature, with the view of advancing the public good by encouraging improved communication, decided that canals should be formed throughout the country. Well, then came railways to compete with canals, and another struggle was made still further to cheapen and quicken communication throughout the land. The owners of canals came forward to oppose the projectors of railways; but the Legislature told them that, as they were bound to further any good plan which would reduce the cost of carriage, they must sanction the formation of railways, although they threatened destruction to canal navigation. And thus had the Legislature sanctioned the diversion of enormous sums of money from various channels of industry for the purpose of establishing railway communication throughout the country. It was well known that since the establishment of that species of communication we were enabled to travel more cheaply as regarded money, and more economically as regarded time; and he wished the House to bear in mind that this very system of railways, which had been already sanctioned by the Legislature, and so much lauded by the supporters of the navigation laws, tended to a great degree to destroy "the nursery," as it was called, of the English Navy. The arguments of the opponents of a repeal of these laws proceeded on the ground that anything that was done to foster foreign trade, tended proportionably to destroy our own. Now he had hoped that they had long since become thoroughly convinced that the advancement and prosperity of other people, was deeply and intimately associated with the well-being and prosperity of ourselves. He thought that the whole tendency of our legislation of late had been to prevent our looking jealously upon the augmentation of the riches around us; and rather to induce us to rejoice that we had very opulent neighbours, since it was out of their opulence that we should be benefited, and that it was far better that we should have the means of trading with those who were rich, industrious, and active, than with who were poor, backward, and idle. Now something had been said with respect to this being the settlement of this matter. He could not but feel strongly what had been so ably urged by his right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade, that if there were a grievance, it was far better that this matter should be promptly settled. If they had made a wrong step in legislation, the earliest moment for retracing it was the fittest moment. The only justification for hesitation or delay, would be in the proof that no grievance existed. But the advocates of the repeal of this unjust protection did think that they had made out a strong case of grievance; and when there was a wrong, it was fit that that wrong should be put an end to as early as possible. The upholders of the present system had pointed in a very marked manner to the number of petitions on the table of the House, which the shipping interest of this country had signed, against any alteration in the navigation laws; and from which they endeavoured to show that our manufacturers and merchants of this country were unfriendly to their repeal. But Gentlemen who represented the shipping interest must be told that they had no right to consider themselves as the true representatives of commerce. They were associated with commerce no doubt, but they were only the instruments used by manufacturers and merchants. Unless there were merchandise to be exported, and mercantile capital wherewith to purchase it, what became of the shipping interest? Why, the shipper was but a mere subsidiary to the manufacturer or merchant. He had no more to do with the creation of wealth than a carter had who conveyed commodities along the high road. He was very important no doubt to the purposes of commerce; but the ship, like the cart or waggon, was useless until something was conveyed by it. It was absolutely necessary to the proper expansion of commercial operations that there should be cheap conveyance. Freight was a most important element in commerce. There were a great many articles in which the question of freight was almost everything. It was a sad affair if, after all her resources and experience, England must confess herself unable to compete with the foreigner in matters of navigation; how humiliating to think that we are to be beaten by the Danish, Swedish, Prussian, and American shipowner! But he did not believe it. The same gloomy pictures were held out by hon. Gentlemen opposite when the question of protection to British agriculture was under the consideration of the House. They were told that if agricultural protection were abolished, England would fall. Indeed, the language that was then uttered by protectionists foreboded far more gloomy results than that of the most zealous advocate that had yet appeared on behalf of the navigation laws. The land was to have no value, and universal destruction was to follow closely upon the establishment of free trade in corn. For his own part he did not believe that the Legislature could produce such considerable changes on any question as some parties represented. There were certain great principles in commerce which settled themselves, and could not be much affected by any act of the Legislature. It was now obvious that building dear ships implied the necessity of paying dear freights; and therefore this Bill very properly proposed that, if an owner found it perfectly impossible to build ships at home as cheap as they could be bought abroad, he might go abroad and buy them. But he doubted very much when the English shipbuilder was put upon his metal—when the pressure of competition came upon him with its iron hand—when he was bound to look around him not for the aid of protective laws—when it was forced upon him to make every possible exertion in order to compete successfully with foreign rivals—he (Dr. Bowring) doubted very much whether under such circumstances the British shipowner would not be found to make, in the shipbuilding of this country, improvements as palpable as those which had been made in other branches of home manufacture under the stimulus which had been administered to them by the abolition of protection. And such a change, he had no doubt, would be beneficial to the British shipowner as well as to the British people generally. He objected to that portion of the Bill which had reference to reprisals, and thought it would be far wiser and far more effectual to instruct by our example rather than by our menaces. The way to conciliate France and Prussia was to invite the produce of those countries into our own, and so make the producers of France and Prussia our friends. A great deal had been said about the sufferings and distress of the West Indian interest; but he thought relief was to be looked for not by continuing restrictions and trammels, but by removing them—by giving them more facilities both for import and export. The aptitude and capacity of our sailors and captains had been eulogised; but he thought there was much room for improvement in them, particularly in respect to temperance, and instruction as regarded the science of navigation, in which many of our merchantmen captains were very deficient. He would quote to the House one passage from the petition of the merchants of London, which had been upon that very night presented to the House, and in the spirit and substance of which he entirely concurred:—

> "Believing that the influence of the navigation laws is all-pervading, your petitioners, in common with others favourable to commercial freedom, urge those important objections to the continuance of our present maritime policy. The representatives of the German Zollverein, the Hanseatic towns, and other foreign States, have expressed their readiness to forego their own privileges provided a system of reciprocity was established, and that similar advantages were conferred upon their shipping in British ports and harbours."

The petition went on further to say, that if this freedom of trade was not granted by England, a system of discriminating duty would be imposed upon British ships and cargoes by those foreign countries, which would end in the total destruction of our Continental trade. The hon. Gentleman proceeded to say that, next to the question of the corn laws, the question of the navigation laws excited the greatest amount of public attention, especially amongst the commercial interest. This was considered the great test by which free trade was to be tried; and the repeal of the navigation laws was looked to by foreign countries as the best evidence of our sincerity as free-traders. The navigation laws had existed for a long period, and in many men's minds they were associated with the strength of the Navy, and with our national and political power. But experience, reflection, growing intelligence, and daily observations, had produced in the minds of the great mass of the thinking portion of the people a change upon this subject, almost similar to that which had been wrought by the machinery of the Anti-Corn-Law League on the subject of the corn laws. He thought the time was come when this great work ought to be done; the attention of the world was turned towards them; and he could not doubt but that the change which they were about to introduce would add to our greatness and security, and that with it the permanence of peace and the extension of mercantile intercourse would be long and happily associated.

Mr. H. BAILLIE said, this was a question in which the interests of all classes in this country were deeply involved. It not only embraced the whole subject of our colonial policy, but it was calculated to exercise a deep influence upon the power, greatness, and naval superiority of this country—that superiority which we had hitherto exercised over the other great nations of the world; and therefore it was that this question ought not to be discussed with any party or political feeling, or in that latter spirit which appeared to have animated the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down. He was perfectly ready to admit that the navigation laws were, to a certain extent, injurious to the trade and commerce of the country. All laws which had a tendency to restrict the free interchange of commodities between the nations of the world, must undoubtedly be so; and therefore it must also be admitted that harbour dues and lighthouse dues were, to a certain extent, injurious to trade and commerce. They tended considerably to increase the rate of freights. The lighthouse dues alone of this country amounted to a tax upon commerce of 400,000*l.* a year. The lighthouse and harbour dues, however, were attended with advantages which far outbalanced any injury which they might be supposed to inflict upon the trade and commerce of the country; and it must be for those who contended that the navigation laws ought to be maintained, to prove that they also were attended with advantages to the community at large which far outbalanced any injury or inconvenience which they might be supposed to inflict upon our trading and commercial interests. There were two points under which this subject might be considered: first, with reference to the effect which the proposed change of the law was calculated to produce on the colonial policy of the empire; and, secondly, with reference to the effect which it might produce upon our shipping interests, that is, upon the commercial marine of England. He would, in the first place, address himself to that portion of the subject which regarded the colonial policy of the empire. And here he must confess that he was at a loss to understand what were the views and opinions of Her Majesty's Ministers with respect to the maintenance of our colonial empire: whether they thought that our colonies were an advantage to us—that they contributed to the power, greatness, and wealth of this country—or whether, on the other hand, they were of opinion that those colonies were costly appendages, maintained at a vast expense to the people of this country, who were heavily taxed for their maintenance, without at the same time contributing in any degree to promote the general wealth or prosperity of the empire. He was disposed to believe that those latter were the views entertained by Her Majesty's Ministers—if not by the noble Lord at the head of the Government, at least by a majority of the Cabinet—and he was naturally led to that conclusion, because he thought that all the measures of the present Government had tended to convince the people of our colonies that henceforth they were to look for no advantage whatever from their connexion with the mother country. They had lately indicated to the people of the colonies that henceforth they were to look for no favour or protection for their produce in the ports and harbours of the mother country, which was not to be afforded to the produce of any other country in the world. They were about further to indicate to the colonists, by the proposed measure, that henceforth they were to look for no favour or protection for their ships in the ports or harbours of the mother country, which was not afforded to the ships of every other country. Now, when those measures should be carried into effect, would any Minister have the kindness to inform the House of what possible advantage our colonies could be to us under those altered relations, and why the people of England should any longer be taxed in order to maintain their military defence? To illustrate the subject, let him take, for example, the case of the Canadas. This country had lately accorded to the Canadas a constitution which, whether it were generally popular in that country or not, did at least virtually establish their independence, because they had now a Government which was only responsible to the Colonial Legislature. But we had indicated to the people of Canada, that henceforth they were to look for no special protection for their produce in the mother country; and by the proposed measure we were about to indicate the same thing with regard to their ships; and to declare, at the same time, that the mother country would not seek for their own ships any favour or protection from the people of Canada. Well, then, when those measures should be carried into effect, he would ask would not Canada, to all intents and purposes, be just as useful, just as advantageous to this country, if she formed one of the States of the American Union? Then if that were so, how long did they suppose the people of England would suffer themselves to be taxed in order to maintain the military defence of Canada? Now he would refer to another, a stronger case. By a series of measures, which were now admitted on all sides to have been most unwise, impolitic, and unjust, having first deprived the British West Indians of that labour which they formerly possessed, and then having passed laws to prevent them obtaining labour from other countries where it might have been procured, and having by that means reduced them to a state bordering upon ruin, the Government now intimated that they had lately discovered, by the study of political economy, that there was no greater advantage to the people of this country in deriving colonial produce from their own colonies, than if it came from Cuba, or Brazil, or any foreign State; and that having made that discovery they were determined henceforth to seek for colonial produce in the cheapest markets. Our British West Indian colonists also were to be told that henceforth they need look for no favour or protection in the harbours or ports of the mother country. When thus ruined and rendered unproductive, could it be said, that henceforth the West India colonies would be of the slightest advantage to Great Britain? Would they not become an immense burden to us? Were they not now taking measures for resisting the payment of taxes and the maintenance of the civil executive? And why should the people of this country be called upon to pay both for their civil administration and their military defence? He, for one, would not henceforth be a party to tax the people of England for the maintenance of those colonies, which the Government by its measures had utterly ruined, and had rendered useless and unprofitable to this country. To prove that this was not mere idle declamation, he would refer to a resolution recently agreed to by the West Indian Association of Liverpool. They said—

> "As it is impossible for the inhabitants of the West Indian colonies to continue the production of sugar and coffee upon such unequal terms and competition with foreigners, this association sees no other means left, unless efficient relief be at once afforded, than for the West Indian colonies to appeal to the Crown for relief from their unprofitable allegiance, in order that they may attach themselves to some other country, which will extend to them the protection which they are at present denied."

That was the result of those measures; and they might depend upon it that they would soon be called upon to intimate to the Canadas and the West Indies that henceforth they must provide for their own military defence. And let them not think that that intimation would be received with any great grief or dissatisfaction. On the contrary, those colonies would seek, and not in vain, for that fostering care and protection from their great natural mother — the United States of America, which had of late been so cruelly denied them by their unjust and unnatural stepmother. If, then, they were determined to carry those measures into effect—and he doubted not they had the power to do so, because they had no serious opposition in that House, many hon. Gentlemen upon his side being prepared to support them against their consciences, because they did not wish to displace the Government—do not let them, at all events, deceive the people of England as to their ultimate intentions. Then if, after the people of England knew what the meaning of the Government was, and were still determined to support them, at least they would have no reason to complain that they had been deceived or misled, or that they had been induced by the confidence they had in the Government to give their support to measures, the ultimate aim, object, and tendency of which they did not clearly understand. So much, then, as regarded the question with reference to the effect it was likely to produce upon our colonial interest. And now let us see what would be the effect of this measure on the shipping interest, and on the commercial marine. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, when he brought forward this measure (and he had again repeated it this evening), frankly admitted that the power and greatness of this country depended upon the maintenance of our commercial marine; and it naturally followed from that admission that any measures which were calculated to weaken, to undermine, or to cause the decrease of the commercial marine of England, and the increase of that of the United States, would be an injury inflicted upon England, and an advantage conferred upon the people of the United States. He would take the admission, therefore, as granted, and admitted on all sides of the House. What, then, was the advantage which you had promised to the trade and commerce of England by this measure? You had promised them to reduce the rate of freights, and a Member of your Government had published a statement to the effect that the advantage to be accorded to the commerce of England by this measure would amount to at least 1,000,000*l.* sterling a year. He knew not if this calculation would turn out to be as minutely correct as that which was made upon a former occasion by the hon. Member for Glasgow, when he promised to the people of England, not the advantage of 1,000,000*l.* but 100,000,000*l.* sterling a year, by the repeal of the corn laws; but he was quite ready to accept the calculation made by the hon. Gentleman, and to admit, for the sake of argument at least, that the advantage would be quite equal to that which he had promised; and he had no hesitation in saying, not that he wished to maintain the shipping interest, or the shipping owners of this country—for he cared not if they were ruined as individuals, or as an interest to-morrow—but it was because he believed the interest of the shipowners of England was that of the whole body of the people of the country, that he was prepared to maintain that interest, even at a cost of 1,000,000*l.* sterling a year, if that should be proved to be necessary. The advantage, then, which you promised to obtain for the commerce of England was a reduction of the rate of freight; and how did you propose to obtain that advantage? By the employment of foreign shipping? But the employment of foreign shipping must of necessity enforce the displacement of your own. You could not employ foreign ships without throwing British ships out of employment. And now let us take an example in order to illustrate this subject. Let us take the case, so often alluded to this evening, of the British West Indies. He was quite ready to admit that the navigation laws acted injuriously to the colonial interest. The injury had been very much exaggerated—widely exaggerated. The people of the West Indies, feeling so unjustly treated by the mother country, had exaggerated very much the injury they received from these laws. It was well known that the British West Indies were supplied with lumber altogether from the United States of America; and the noble Lord the Member for Lynn had calculated that not less than 140,000 tons of American shipping annually frequented the ports of the West Indies with lumber. Under the existing law these vessels were unable to take away cargoes of sugar from British ports, and consequently they were obliged to leave the ports of the West Indies in ballast, at least a great portion of them. If the laws were repealed, of course they would not; they would take cargoes of sugar for British ports at a reduced freight, because they would be, in the first place, return cargoes; and it was admitted it would be a slight advantage to the colonial interest. Now he would suppose, that 50,000 tons of American ships should annually take in cargoes of sugar from the British West Indies for British ports; would anybody deny that 50,000 tons of British shipping would be thrown out of employment? That was not the only evil. Those vessels would arrive and deliver cargoes in British ports, and then they would naturally seek to obtain return cargoes again for the United States, which they would be able to afford to do at less rates than British vessels; and, therefore, double injury would be effected, because other British vessels might be thrown out of employment. No one could doubt that that must be the result of the measure as regarded the West India trade. Then as to the effect that would be produced upon the India and China trade, Mr. Aylwin, a great merchant at Calcutta, but not a shipowner, said in a letter to Mr. G. F. Young—

> "My Calcutta firm has for many years past been connected with the Continent, and I have, on several occasions, had charters of foreign vessels offered me considerably under the rates which charters for English vessels were at the same time commanding. In fact, I have no hesitation in asserting, I could at any time have chartered an A 1 foreign bottom for the round between Europe and Calcutta at 4*l.* 10*s.* per ton, which I consider fully 15*s.* or 20*s.* under what a British ship must earn, in order to cover her expenses."

The same gentleman then went on to say that the competition of the foreigners in the India and China trade would most unquestionably lower the homeward rate of freight; and the result would be that foreign vessels would be employed, and British vessels would be thrown out of employment. He admitted, as far as he was concerned, that this measure would be of advantage to himself; but he was opposed to the repeal of the navigation laws, because he believed it would be injurious to the commercial navy of England, and, therefore, to the best interests of this country. These were noble and patriotic sentiments—they were well worthy the mind of a distinguished British merchant; and as such no doubt they would be appreciated. And he would observe that the Americans were most anxious to compete with us in this carrying trade of India and China. He calculated that they would be able to do that; and he must remind the House that the carrying trade had nothing whatever to do with the general trade and commerce of England; we might by this measure greatly extend the general trade, and at the same time diminish the carrying trade. We might increase our general trade with China, and our carrying trade to that country might fall into the hands of the people of the United States of America. You might suppose this was a very improbable occurrence, but you could not assert that it was impossible; and without going into any theoretical discussion upon the subject, let us see if we could bring the question to the test of experience; let us inquire whether there existed any trade at present on which we had had a fair competition with the people of the United States of America, and what had been the result of that competition. He said, then, that there was a trade in which we had, for the last twenty-five years, maintained an active competition with the people of the United States—a trade in which no favour had been shown to either party, and which, he lamented to say, had ended by the total destruction of our trade, and the complete triumph of the trade of the United States—he alluded to the South Sea fishery. It was probably well known to the House that the South Sea whale fishery was a trade which required a large capital to carry it on, for the vessels were employed upon an average voyage of four years; they were manned by double the usual number of sailors, the ablest, and best, and most adventurous that could be obtained. It was, therefore, a trade which was peculiarly calculated as a school for our Navy. These were all advantages which must be supposed to have told in favour of England, because capital was more abundant in England than in the United States, and sailors were more easily procured. In spite of these advantages the result of this trade had been as follows:—The Americans might be said to have commenced their competition with us about the year 1821. In 1821 the number of American ships employed in the trade was under 90, and their seamen 2,900. On the 1st January, 1846, the number of American vessels had increased to 737, their burden to 233,282 tons, and the number of officers and seamen to upwards of 20,000, the first seamen in the world. The number of British ships engaged in the whale fishery in 1821 was 295; seamen 11,900. In 1848 the number of ships employed by Great Britain was 61, and the number of seamen 2,630. Thus had we been completely driven out of this trade, utterly and entirely ruined by the competition; and the evidence before the Lords' Committee clearly and distinctly proved, according to the evidence of one of the greatest merchants in the trade, that he was ruined by the advantages which the American vessels possessed over the English, and the cheaper mode in which they could navigate. This was boasted of in the American House of Assembly. He was not going to assert that the same result would inevitably follow the China and India trade; but this he did assert that a certain number of British vessels would be thrown out of employment, and a certain number of American vessels would be employed in their places; and that was admitted to be an evil by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade. He need hardly go into the argument in order to prove that if the principle of this measure were good, there was no reason why Government should not make it of universal application; there was no reason why it should be applied to the long sea-voyage trade, and not applied to the coasting trade; because if it were advantageous to the people of this country to receive the produce of different countries at a cheap rate, it was also advantageous to the people of this country to receive their own produce at a cheap rate. It was, for example, an advantage to the citizens of London to receive their coal from Newcastle at a cheaper rate, whether it came in foreign or English bottoms. What, then, was the reason you had made this difference between the two? Simply this, you had not confidence in the success of your own measure. You had not confidence in the principle of your measure. You were not quite certain it might not turn out disadvantageously, and were inclined to make an experiment in the first instance with the long sea-voyage trade. If, then, these fears which you entertained should really turn out not to have been without foundation—if it should really turn out that this measure should lead to those consequences which he had endeavoured to point out, namely, to the decrease of our commercial marine, and to the separation of our colonies—you would then have justly excited the indignation of the people of this country, whose dearest interests you would thus have betrayed and sacrificed, without the prospect of any adequate compensation. For even should your measure prove successful, you could hold out no great or flattering prospect of advantage to the people of this country, beyond a slight reduction in the rate of freight; but should your measure prove unsuccessful, you would then have inflicted a blow on the greatness and prosperity of the empire, which would justly call down upon your heads the execration of all classes of the people; at least, of all those who felt a deep and patriotic interest in the power, the glory, and naval superiority of their country.

MR. JAMES WILSON would not follow the hon. Member into the discussion of extraneous matters, but would address himself to the Amendment moved by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, which raised the general question, whether the principles of free trade, which had been carried out by the House in respect to commodities, ought also to be applied to shipping? He was quite aware that a great authority had been quoted to justify, in the case of the navigation laws, an exception from those principles. But he thought, if hon. Gentlemen allowed him to make a few observations on this subject, he could show them that the remarks of Adam Smith did not apply to the case now before the House, especially after the experience they had had of the operation of free-trade principles during the last few years. Adam Smith, in referring to this question, freely admitted that even if it could be shown that ships could be built more cheaply in other countries, and that they could be manned more cheaply there than they could in this country, yet, if it appeared that British shipbuilders were unable to withstand competition with foreign shipbuilders, arising from any natural and insuperable impediment, that then it might be the policy of this country to incur a great money sacrifice in order to support her political greatness, and to maintain her naval defences. If that was the position Adam Smith laid down, he (Mr. Wilson) was quite prepared to assent to it. If he could not show the House that this country was prepared to compete with foreign nations—if he could not show that we had carried on such competition successfully—he would be quite prepared to give his sanction to the doctrine of Adam Smith, and to say that our naval defences ought to be maintained even at the sacrifice of our commercial interests. But he conceived that Adam Smith had overlooked a great principle. It was only within the last twenty years that the free-trade policy introduced by Mr. Huskisson, and others who succeeded him, had been tried; and it had been found that free trade had not only had the effect of introducing cheaper commodities from abroad, but also of inducing a larger and cheaper production at home. There was no one article to which free-trade principles applied, with regard to which it would not be found that, while the imports from abroad had increased, the competition had produced increased production and increased cheapness at home, and consequently an increased power of competing with foreign countries. If, then, the same result was found with regard to shipping—if it appeared that the partial free trade applied by Mr. Huskisson to the shipping interest had had the effect of increasing the commercial and maritime greatness of this country, and its power to compete with foreign nations—he contended that they had encouragement to go on in the same direction, in the conviction that by carrying out the same policy they would promote the commercial and naval supremacy of the empire. These were questions of fact, and not of opinion; and it was only necessary that he should refer to the statistics of the last twenty years to show whether our commercial navy had increased or declined during the partial competition to which it had been exposed during that period. In 1823 Mr. Huskisson proposed a modification of the navigation laws, in order to avert the difficulty and danger which he saw would result from foreign countries imitating the example which had been set by North America in wringing from this country the Reciprocity Treaty of 1815. In 1823 Prussia passed a similar law to that adopted by the United States, prohibiting the entrance of British ships into Prussian ports; and she compelled the British Government to give to her, and to other countries willing to afford us reciprocal advantages, privileges similar to those which they had conceded to the United States. The consequence was, that reciprocity treaties were concluded between this country and Russia, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and other States; and he would ask the House to observe what had been the result of these various treaties. Perhaps some hon. Gentleman might not be aware, that previously to the adoption of Mr. Huskisson's measure, from 1817 to 1823, the tonnage of ships possessed by the United Kingdom and its dependencies had been gradually decreasing. In 1817 the tonnage of shipping belonging to the United Kingdom and its dependencies was 2,664,000 tons; in 1823 it had declined to 2,506,000 tons. But from that period to the present day the tonnage of British shipping had rapidly increased, until, in 1846, it was 3,817,000 tons. He thought, then, as he had shown that when a strict monopoly was maintained the shipping trade was in a declining state, and that immediately after the approach to free-trade principles there was a rapid increase in the amount of tonnage, it would be admitted that there was no reason to doubt the ability of the British shipbuilders and British shipowners to compete with foreigners. He would now call the attention of the House to another fact, to show the condition of the shipping interest prior to Mr. Huskisson's change, and subequently. He found that in the three years preceding the alteration of the law effected by Mr. Huskisson, the tonnage of ships built in this kingdom was—in 1821, 74,000 tons; in 1822, 67,000 tons; and in 1823, 86,000 tons. But what had been the tonnage of ships built during the last three years? In 1844, 159,000 tons; in 1845, 203,000 tons; and in 1846, 223,000 tons. This return, he might observe, referred exclusively to sailing vessels, and did not include any steam ships. They had been told that the Reciprocity Acts which had been adopted since 1823 had given a great advantage to foreign over English shipbuilders. He thought that, in considering such a question as this, it would be unfair to pick out any particular country as an example, and he would therefore take the tonnage of the whole of the shipping from and to this country and those States with which we were now on terms of reciprocity prior to the adoption of the Reciprocity Act, and for the last year. In 1820 the tonnage of British ships entered outwards to all those countries was 626,000 tons, and of foreign ships entered inwards, 464,000 tons. In 1846 the tonnage of foreign ships entered inwards had increased to 1,578,000 tons. The hon. Gentleman who last addressed the House had said that every ton of foreign shipping that came to this country must displace a ton of British shipping; but what was the fact? Why, although the tonnage of foreign ships entered inwards had increased from 464,000 tons in 1820, to 1,578,000 tons in 1846, the tonnage of British shipping entered outwards had increased from 626,000 tons in 1820, to 1,920,000 tons in 1846. He (Mr. Wilson) denied, then, the statement of the hon. Member, that every ton of foreign shipping they might employ displaced a ton of British shipping. With regard to our trade with the whole world, he found that in 1824, the tonnage of British shipping entered outwards and inwards was 3,291,000 tons; and the tonnage of foreign ships entered outwards and inwards, 1,385,000 tons. It was true that in 1846 the tonnage of foreign ships had increased to 3,727,000 tons, but the tonnage of English ships had also increased to 8,620,000 tons. He thought, then, that either with regard to those countries with which we had treaties of reciprocity, or taking the whole trade of the world, after the relaxation of the navigation laws which had been adopted from time to time, there was no reason to fear that British shipowners or shipbuilders would be unable to compete with foreigners. A great deal had been said upon the colonial question, and on that subject he would say a few words. The quantity of shipping which left our ports in 1820 was 1,549,000 tons, and of that amount 746,000 tons went to the colonies, and 802,000 to neutral countries. In 1846 the colonial trade, the increase of which chiefly consisted of the East Indian and Australian trade, afforded employment to 1,672,000 tons of shipping, but at the same period the trade with the neutral ports of the world had increased to 2,721,000 tons. The whole increase of the colonial trade within the period he had mentioned had been 110 per cent, while the increase in the neutral trade had been 240 per cent. They had been told that by the change which it was now proposed to make, they would pursue a course which would be disadvantageous to the colonies in some respects, and that in others the advantage would be so small that it would be of no real benefit to them. They had also been told that if they prevented colonial ships from coming here with peculiar privileges, or if they deprived ships bound to the colonies of the privileges they now enjoyed, they would immediately tear asunder the tie which knit together the mother country and the colonies. It was asked, "Why should you maintain a colony, if you will not keep up these restrictions?" That argument would be intelligible if it were shown that the restrictions were mutually beneficial; but if, instead of that, they were a mutual evil, why should not the removal of them be hailed as an advantage to both the mother country and the colonies? The hon. Gentleman who spoke last referred to the probability of the employment of the ships that carried lumber from North America to the West Indies; but, considering the condition of those colonies—considering that we were called upon to relieve them in every possible way—he could not have used a stronger argument in favour of the measure now proposed. If by removing the restrictions under which the colonies laboured we could enable them to send their sugar home at a lower rate by employing the lumber ships of America, we should undoubtedly confer a great benefit upon those colonies; and if also we could enable the British manufacturer to send his goods out to the United States by those ships on their return voyages at a cheaper rate, a benefit would surely be conferred upon him and all the industrious classes dependent on his efforts. The hon. Member had alluded also to the effect this alteration would have upon our East India shipping; but there could be no more advantageous thing than to open up means whereby, whether in American ships or British, the growth of the East Indies could be imported here, and our own distant territories rendered more available for the supply of important raw materials. Then, if it appeared, so far as free-trade principles had been extended to the navigation laws, that there had been nothing to lead us to doubt that the British shipowner and shipbuilder were able to compete with foreigners, there was nothing to induce us to hold shipping an exception in regard to those principles. Then came the objections of Adam Smith. If free trade stimulated the exertions of the British shipbuilder and shipowner—if competition acted in this as it did in other cases, and led to an increase rather than a diminution of our shipping—then free trade tended to an increase of our national defences. It was only necessary to compare the shipping of 1820 and 1846, and observe the number of men added by the increase of the shipping in that period; if it was upon our commercial navy we depended to man our Royal Navy, surely the larger the number of ships from which we could draw men, the more sure we might be of a sufficient supply. But there was another important consideration, which had been considerably overlooked. If the increase in foreign shipping just stated to the House had not taken place since Mr. Huskisson introduced a policy which had been followed by succeeding Ministers, how should we have had brought here that increased quantity of raw material which we had been fortunate enough to obtain and to work up ? The object of our legislation for the last seven years had been to increase our imports and exports; but to do that we must have an increased quantity of shipping. Would it be well, then, by artificial stimulants, or high protection, to divert capital from more profitable occupations into the shipping trade of this country now, when capital was so scarce ? Our imports had risen since 1823 thus :—Of sheep's wool, from 19,000,000 lbs. to 62,000,0000 lbs. ; of cotton wool, from 169,000,000 lbs.; to 473,000,000 lbs.; of sugar, from 210,000 tons, to 410,000 tons; of wheat, from 394,000 quarters, to upwards of 12,000,000 last year, without producing any effect upon the market worth speaking of. Would it not be wise to encourage a sufficiency of shipping to bring the supply of goods, which the whole scope of our commercial policy tended to increase ? It could be no advantage to this country that freights should be high; higher freight was precisely tantamount to a greater distance from the place of production. We might as well refuse to avail ourselves of a near market, because we could bring goods from it cheap, and go to a greater distance because the price here would then be higher. Who would say it would be a national advantage that we should remove to a greater distance the places whence we received the chief supplies of our raw material and colonial produce ? There were many proofs that British shipping could compete with foreign successfully; there were many countries where it did so, enjoying no protection whatever; and perhaps it would compete with greater success were it better attended to and manned. The return of the ships entered outwards from Rio Janeiro in 1845, showed 571 ships, 84 of which were British; but those British ships did not come home to England, enjoying any peculiar protection; they went to various parts of the world in open competition with Bremen, Trieste, and other shipping. Complaints had been made, however, of a very serious and alarming nature, affecting the carrying trade of this country. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Labouchere) alluded the other night to the consular returns; very strong corroborations of his remarks had been sent to him (Mr. Wilson) without solicitation. He had a letter from a very respectable mercantile house in the City, enclosing an extract from one dated Rio Janeiro, April the 1st, stating that vessels were much wanted, but that a few days ago there were eight A 1 British ships there, unable to get a charter, owing to their character or that of their captains for carelessness. He had also a letter from the City, dated the 23rd inst., stating that on the previous morning an extract of a letter from Rio was by a member of Lloyd's put on the intelligence board, but very shortly after taken down on the authority of other members of the Committee; its substance was, that whereas every foreign vessel had been quickly taken up for coffee, there were eight British ships that no one would have anything to do with, on account of the carelessness of the captains, and the manner in which they delivered their cargoes. [Mr. G. Robinson : It is altogether untrue.] The hon. Member might inspect the letter sent to him (Mr. Wilson). If he had made out a case at all, it must be conceded that there was no difference between ships and other articles of commerce, as regarded the application of the principle of free trade. Then came a question, with respect to which a great difference of opinion prevailed amongst Gentlemen of high authority — namely, the policy of adhering to the principle of reciprocity, first adopted by Mr. Huskisson. He was glad to hear the frank admission made by the right hon. Member for the University of Oxford on a former evening, of the difficulty which the late Government experienced in their attempt to carry out free trade on the principle of reciprocity. The question, then, resolved itself into this — Ought we to make our own enjoyment of that which we knew to be beneficial, dependent on our capability of prevailing upon others to participate in it? The experience of the late Government as to the difficulty of prevailing upon other countries to enter into treaties of reciprocity with us ought to prevent other Governments, and the House, from wishing a similar policy to be pursued in future. It appeared from the statement of the right hon. Member for the University of Oxford, that the moment we went to other countries and asked them to make treaties of reciprocity with us, they imbibed the most exaggerated notions of the advantages which the treaties would be of to us, and preferred claims of an extravagant character, which usually ended in long and futile negotiations. The Government, therefore, was right in proposing to do that which it knew to be beneficial to ourselves, and thus to set an example to foreign nations of its confidence in the principle of free trade. On that ground he thought the plan proposed by his right hon. Friend would cost less trouble, would ultimately be more successful than an attempt to obtain the same end by means of reciprocity treaties. Hon. Members opposite had referred to the failure of the success of the experiment in free trade; but they were not justified in attributing the present state of the country to that cause. It was deeply to be regretted that the country was suffering from a great depression of prices, and the cessation of the usual demand for our manufacturing and other products; but he asked, whether the condition of any other country which had not adopted the principles of free trade was better than our own? [MR. ROBINSON: The United States of America.] It was a matter of wonder that the country had passed through the ordeal to which it had been subjected with so little difficulty. Had it not been for the measures carried into effect by Sir R. Peel during the last seven years, the sufferings of the country during the last two years would have been greatly aggravated; and he entertained a confident hope that those measures, when fairly developed, would prove to contain within them the germs of great future prosperity.

MR. H. DRUMMOND: Sir, although unwilling at this late hour to prolong the debate, I desire to submit some observations to the consideration of the House previous to your leaving the chair, because I have the misfortune to differ in opinion not only from Her Majesty's Ministers who have brought this proposition forward, but also from many Members on this side of the House. I am willing to concede that the course of policy which has been pursued by both parties has rendered necessary some such measure as that now under discussion; that it is a step essentially requisite in the course which has been adopted for many years; but as I object to that course *in toto*, I must necessarily object to each step taken in the same direction; nevertheless it is not my intention to offer an unavailing and therefore factious opposition, and I will leave Ministers unembarrassed by hostile votes hereafter from me. I confess I was exceedingly astonished at hearing Parliament called upon to adopt a measure of this magnitude upon such feeble grounds—a measure which has for one of its objects to turn British seamen out of our ships, and to man them with Norwegians and Lascars — a measure by which it is proposed at one fell swoop to wipe out the whole code of our maritime laws from the days of Richard I. to the present time—a code of laws, observe, not enacted at once, but which has been developed year after year, or rather age after age, throughout that whole period. This mighty change is, however, to be made in order to work out more completely the principles of the thing called free trade. Gentlemen, doubtless, know what they mean when they make use of the terms free trade on the one side of the House, and of protection on the other; but I am somewhat at a loss to understand them, for I find that the free-traders still leave many articles of commerce with duties upon them, whilst the protectionists make no objection to the unrestricted admission of others. Still there must be a principle in it if we could but get at it. Yorkshire has been heaving on one side, and Lancashire on the other; there has been a mighty mountain in labour, and something must be produced at last: the statistical department of the Board of Trade lent its obstetric aid; the politico-economical club volunteered its assistance, but it is not easy to determine what part it took in the operation—perhaps it only held the sponge with the chloroform to the nose of the patient; at length a great dogma was enunciated, which was, that we ought to buy in the cheapest, and sell in the dearest market.

This was the wonderful discovery of the age: this is the test by which we are to estimate the value of the military and naval defences of the country, and by which the whole course of Government is to be regulated. Sages in all times had pronounced certain dogmata by which they have become celebrated; one has said, "Know thyself;" another has said, "Pleasure is the greatest good;" another had said, "Virtue is the greatest good." The great dogma of the Manchester school of the present day when reduced to its lowest denomination is, "Buy for a penny, sell for twopence." This maxim has all the characteristics of a great philosophic truth; it is simple and comprehensive, and yet minute: it takes in the great Manchester manufacturer, and the merchant princes of London, and yet does not leave out the poor barrow-woman at her stall, nor even the dog and cats' meat man. Such is the principle on which the Government of the country is conducted, and this is the only ground which has been offered by Her Majesty's Ministers for the adoption of the measure under consideration, and we are urged to pass it merely as the means of procuring sugar and cochineal cheaper than we can at present. The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, referred to the relaxation of our commercial system which took place at the close of the last war. Doubtless at the end of that war, this country was in a very different position from that in which it was at the commencement, not only with reference to its own circumstances, but also with reference to its relative position as regarded other European States. Our nearest and most restless neighbour had increased its army tenfold; other nations had done the same to nearly an equal extent; whilst our army had been little more than doubled: their territories had however, become (with the exception of Prussia) much more compact, whilst ours had been extended many thousand miles. Mr. Huskisson, Lord Wallace, and others, justly thought that many regulations which had been established when certain trades were in their infancy might be wisely discontinued; and be it remembered that many of these regulations were bound up in treaties for which political equivalents had been received by us, and were not the creation of our laws. The only way by which it ever was or is now possible for you to retain your colonies, is to make them integral parts of the mother country; to give them every privilege which we enjoy; and to make the trade between them and the mother country as free as it is between any two English counties. Instead of sending them out constitutions from your Colonial Office, which prove generally inapplicable to them, you should have given to the local authorities power to adopt any English laws which they pleased, and in this way although the foundations of their local laws are all various, some being Dutch, some French, some Portuguese, and some Spanish, they would gradually have grown into union with the laws of the mother country. Instead of doing this you have sacrificed your colonies to your manufacturing system: you have starved them for the sake of Manchester, and you are going on in the same course of class legislation. You know well that no trade can be carried on for any length of time between two parties unless it were eventually advantageous to both, and you intentionally prefer to give the benefit of trading with you to the French, or to any foreigner you can find, rather than to your own brethren the colonists; you intentionally do this—you intentionally enrich the French and Germans, and impoverish the subjects of your own country. This was your intention during your whole agitation about the corn laws. You said it was for the sake of the poor. Do you think the poor believe you? Do you think that they do not see through the fallacy when you talk about cheapening the poor man's loaf at the very time that you are taking away from his employer the power of giving him the means to purchase that loaf? You say that the poor are ungrateful, that there is an attempt made to set the working classes against the manufacturers: there is no need to do that. The poor see through all this perfectly well. I never spoke to a working operative, as you call him, or country labourer concerning free trade, who was not against it; and when you charge them with ingratitude to you for the benefit you say you have conferred by giving them cheap bread; they feel, though they may not know how to express in the words of Lord Bacon, that, "Ingratitude is sometimes only a keen insight into the motives of benevolence." When allusion was made on a recent occasion to the advantage and non-advantage of colonies, and to the possibility of our retaining them, the noble Lord at the head of Her Majesty's Government said that he had been accustomed to contemplate with pride the greatness of this empire, and that if ever the time should arrive when they should be separated from the mother country some other hand than his must be looked for to sign the deed. This sentiment was creditable to him as an Englishman, and worthy of the high reputation which he deservedly enjoys as a British statesman; but there is in this country one greater than he is; and if it would be a painful thing for him to present such a deed to his Sovereign, it would be doubly painful to Her to receive it. Monarchy is fatherhood, and the Sovereign loves all her children alike. The noble Lord must remember how painful it was to George III. to receive the Ambassador from the United States; and if the noble Lord perseveres in the policy which he is now pursuing it is impossible for him to preserve the colonies of this empire. I concede every word that has been demanded with respect to the commercial advantages which may accrue to this nation by the present policy. You may be rich, but you will be contemptible. The policy of your Edwards, long before the policy of Richard II. began, was to make the country great, knowing that when a country was great it would be rich, and caring nothing for its being rich unless it were also great. The object of your idolatry is wealth; wealthy you may be, and the Queen may have an European Island like Corsica or Sicily; but if you persevere in your present course the Sovereign of the British Empire she never can be more.

MR. SCOTT fully concurred in all the sentiments which had fallen from the hon. Gentleman who had just addressed the House. What were the grounds offered to the House to justify their assenting to pass this suicidal measure? He would ask hon. Gentlemen who advocated it on the principle of free trade, whether the poor-law returns, or any statistics as to the state of the poor in the agricultural or manufacturing districts, were of such a character as to warrant them in saying that free trade had contributed to the happiness of the people? He denied that it had in any degree improved their condition. The evidence taken before the Committee of the House of Lords showed the building, manning, and victualling of British ships to be far more expensive than in foreign shipping. When the Committee appointed by the House of Commons had made no report of their opinion, and when the Committee of the House of Lords was still sitting, he had a right to assume that the facts and statements which had been put forth on behalf of the shipping interest, being unchallenged, were unchallengeable. He could show that the increase of British shipping, great as it had been, was not so great in proportion as those who competed with us. The very nations who were taking our carrying trade away from us were those who rejected our manufactures in order to establish their own. These were surely arguments against any relaxation of the navigation laws. One effect of the abolition of the navigation laws would be that the Prussians, whose ships were not suited to such trade as was now carried on with our colonies, would be encouraged to build ships for long and distant voyages, and would thus supplant us in our foreign carrying trade, as they had already done in our manufactures. It had been argued that our shipmasters were not so moral as those of foreign countries; but surely, whatever reason that might be for taking measures to make them more moral and more efficient, it was no reason why Britain should give up the exclusive right of navigation to her colonies. It could never be urged as a good argument against the existence of the navigation laws. Another argument was, that the public would derive advantages from the reduction of freights; but they might depend upon it that any such reduction would be merely temporary, for if foreigners once got possession of the carrying trade of this country, freights would be sure to rise higher than ever. If the carrying trade with the colonies were opened to foreigners, the result would be the same as Sir Henry Pottinger had explained with respect to China; American longcloths supplying the place of British manufactures. They would sever the last bond which united their commerce with those dependencies; for if they lost their shipping, they would lose their colonies, and with them their naval supremacy.

Debate adjourned to Thursday.

QUALIFICATION OF MEMBERS—
MR. HARCOURT.

MR. SPEAKER begged to call the attention of the House to a circumstance which had occurred with reference to one of its Members. An hon. Member, who had been returned at the last election for the county of Oxford (Mr. G. G. V. Harcourt), had appeared at the table at an early period of the evening, and taken the oaths, but did not deliver in a paper with a statement of his qualification, nor sign the usual qualification roll, thinking it unnecessary to do so, because at the time of his election he was the heir apparent of a Peer of Parliament (the Archbishop of York). He (Mr. Speaker) apprehended, however, that according to the Act of Parliament a person, although he was heir apparent to a Peer at the time of his election, yet if he had ceased to be so in consequence of the death of his father, was bound on taking his seat to deliver in a statement of his qualification, and to sign the usual paper, otherwise his election would be void. [Mr. SPEAKER read the words of the Act.] The hon. Member, had now in his hands a declaration of his qualification, and was prepared to deliver it in if it was the pleasure of the House to permit him to do so. He had only to ask the House, therefore, whether it was their pleasure that the hon. Gentleman should deliver in his qualification at once?

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, it was clear the penal part of the Statute did not apply to the hon. Member; but, if it was necessary, he would submit to the House a Motion upon it.

MR. SPEAKER having signified that no Motion was necessary,

MR. HARCOURT offered his thanks to the House for their courtesy. Having sat for more than forty years as a Member of that House without having had occasion to deliver in a qualification, and having at his last election delivered in his qualification as the eldest son of a Peer, he did not think it necessary to deliver in any other on his present election.

The hon. Gentleman then delivered in his qualification, and signed the qualification roll accordingly.

House adjourned at One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, May 30, 1848.

MINUTES.] *Took the Oaths.*—The Lord Bishop of Killaloe, Kilfenora, Clonfert, and Kilmacduagh.

PUBLIC BILLS.—1^a Collectors of Cess (Ireland).

2^a Evicted Destitute Poor (Ireland).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By the Bishop of Lincoln, from the Wesleyan Methodists of Boddington, and several other Places, against the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sundays.—By Lord Brougham, from several Lodges of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, for an Extension of the Provisions of the Benefit Societies' Act to that Order.—From the Parish of St. Giles, Northampton, for the Abolition of all Church Rates.—From Freeholders, Managers, and Labourers in Jamaica, praying for Relief of the Effect produced on the West Indian Colonies by the Sugar Duties Act.—From the County of Lancaster, for the Adoption of a System of Secular Education, to be supported by Local Rates.—From Westmoreland, Yorkshire, and a Number of other Places, in favour of the Jewish Disabilities Bill.—From the Muir Club, in favour of Parliamentary Reform.—By the Bishop of Norwich, from Norwich, Coventry, and Great Yarmouth, to be Relieved from the Payment of Legacy Duty on all Charitable Bequests.—By the Earl of Eglintoun, from the Commissioners of Supply, and Others, of Perth and Renfrew, for a Revision of the Laws relating to the Currency.—From Tain, Glasgow, and other Places, against the Marriage (Scotland) Bill, and Registering Births, &c. (Scotland) Bill.—From Stirling, for the Immediate Completion of the Trigonometrical Survey of Scotland.—By Earl Fitzwilliam, from Mayo and Adrahan, for an Alteration of the Poor Law (Ireland).—From Boston, for the Discontinuance of Grants of Money for the Temple of Juggernaut.—From the Longport Union, that more Effectual Measures may be Adopted for Checking the Impositions of Professed Mendicants.—From Attwick, County of York, against the Jewish Disabilities Bill.

THE IRISH POOR LAW.

The EARL of LUCAN rose to move—

"That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the operation of the Irish Poor Law Acts, relative to the rating of Immediate Lessors."

He thought he had on a former occasion shown the state of the law in this respect to be so defective as to induce many of their Lordships to be of opinion that the Government would think it their duty to give immediate attention to the subject. Since then two or three months had elapsed, and Government apparently had bestowed no consideration whatever on the subject, and the evils of which he had complained still continued. Under these circumstances, he felt it to be his duty to bring the subject again under the notice of their Lordships, with a view of obtaining the appointment of a Select Committee to investigate the subject. He believed that there was not a Member of their Lordships' House who had examined the working of the law in Ireland, who would be disposed to deny that an extended inquiry had become absolutely necessary; and it appeared to him that nothing would be more unwise than to refuse the reasonable demand of those who required that full investigation should take place. The Government, he conceived, ought to consider a subject of this nature calmly and deliberately, and not rashly refuse inquiry; and he entertained a strong opinion that the responsible advisers of the Crown had committed a great error when they refused to accede to the unequivocally expressed wish of a very large portion of the other House of Parliament, who claimed the inquiry for which he now moved. In making this Motion he wished it to be distinctly understood, that he had no desire to get rid of the rating of the immediate lessor; on the contrary, he approved of such a plan. The noble Earl then proceeded to complain of the manner in which rates had been struck in the county of Mayo, as well as in other parts of Ireland; and he complained also of the manner in which the law was carried out in that county, of the number of suits instituted for the recovery of the poor-rates, as well as of the manner in which the law relating to the poor was administered throughout Ireland generally. He declined to make any direct complaint of the extent to which legal proceedings had been taken against himself, although a vast amount of bills and declarations had been filed against him in the courts of Dublin; he did not, however, hesitate to say—though he would not occupy the time of their Lordships by lengthened details regarding himself—that there were strong reasons to complain of the existing state of the law; that its condition was a mockery and an absurdity; and that no intelligent or dispassionate person could deny the necessity for minute and searching inquiry. Of such an inquiry as he proposed, no one would say that it would excite any unreasonable expectation in the minds of any portion of the community; and for that among other reasons he did contend that the application which he made ought not to be refused. Amongst the other grounds of complaint he might mention this, as forming a strong argument in favour of inquiry, that the new Bill gave no appeal to the lessor, though the occupier possessed such a privilege. The whole county was swarmed with latitats, capias, and bills of privilege. There was a bill of privilege filed against him in the superior courts, which filled forty-five skins of parchment, or 1,000 office sheets of paper. There was no appeal for the occupier, although there was a good and sufficient one for the lessor. He had also to complain that clauses were enforced against the resident proprietor, by a gross abuse of authority, which were only intended to apply to the absentee. If the law was as defective as he had showed it to be, and if the abuses which existed were as weighty as he had proved them, he thought that he had made out a sufficient case for the inquiry for which he prayed. The noble Earl concluded by proposing his Motion as above.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE was under the necessity of opposing the Motion of the noble Earl. The appointment of a Committee of Inquiry would have the effect of interfering with and delaying the decision of questions already in a course of adjudication, and embarrass the operations of a law not yet sufficiently developed. [The noble Marquess addressed some observations in reply to Lord Lucan across the table, but they were quite inaudible.]

Earl FITZWILLIAM supported the Motion of his noble Friend (the Earl of Lucan), and expressed his regret that, admitting apparently the abuses and oppressions of the law, the noble Marquess should have opposed the Motion, and upon the ground that inquiry would tend to protract the proceedings. But the proceedings in the courts of law might not be terminated as soon as the noble Marquess anticipated. He was fully aware how long such proceedings could be protracted, especially if one party were desirous that such a course should be adopted. They might end in six weeks—they might not end in six months. The Commissioners did not adopt the method by which they could have obtained the speediest justice: by no means. They went into the superior courts at Dublin. And why did they go there? There could be no doubt as to the reason. They went there in order to show the gentlemen of Ireland the power which the Poor Law Commissioners had over them. He approved of the appointment of the Committee, for he was of opinion that, amongst other advantages, it would have the effect of showing that Irish matters were not neglected in this country. The noble Earl proceeded to say, that the present state of pauperism in Ireland was most alarming; and he quoted returns of the number of persons in the workhouses, and receiving outdoor relief. The rates had increased enormously during the last quarter, and he had no doubt they would increase in a corresponding ratio in the next three months. He asked Parliament and the Government to say whether they thought that the state of things now existing in Ireland could possibly continue without some remedy? And what had the Government done? As regarded this mass of pauperism, they had applied to the whole of Ireland a law which was properly applicable only to a small portion of it. Did his noble Friends intend to go on in this way? Would they do nothing more for Ireland? It was true there was an Encumbered Estates Bill, and of the principle of that Bill he approved; but at the same time he doubted very much whether it would accomplish the object that was desired. And if it should so prove a failure, another Session would have passed away, and nothing be done for Ireland. They had a great work to perform, and had not yet so much as begun it. But they must perform that work unless they intended to leave Ireland in her present condition. If there was anything like sanguineness in their expectation of seeing Ireland in a different condition, they must deal with that great phenomenon of the rural population. They had not touched that question yet. They had given money and lent money, and they might continue to do so. As to the loan of last year, they would have to repeat it in 1849, and again in 1850, or they would do nothing. But even then, with loan after loan, they would do nothing; for all were now agreed that the great mass of the rural population in many parts of Ireland was the phenomenon with which they had to deal. And while this mass of pauperism existed in Ireland, let them look to the other parts of the British dominions, and what did they behold? In Canada, in New Brunswick, in Australia, they would find millions of acres, requiring only persons to cultivate them. Was there not an obvious source of relief for that state of things to be found in a proper system of emigration? Would not the adoption of such a system be better than keeping a population at home increasing until we did not know what to do with them. He knew that difficulties existed against emigration on a large scale, but those difficulties were not insuperable; and he would remark to their Lordships that the Legislature had recently placed restrictions upon emigration, instead of encouraging that means of relieving the pressure caused by a superabundant population. In reference to this restriction upon emigration, he would remark that the desire to emigrate was far less in Ireland this year than last year; and would, if the potato crop succeeded, be still less next year. He was in favour of the Committee, for he thought it would be advantageous.

Earl GREY complained of the inconvenient course his noble Friend had adopted in raising a general discussion upon a Motion confined to ground so narrow as that of the noble Earl—a Motion simply for a Committee "to inquire into the operation of the Irish Poor Law Act relative to the rating of immediate lessors." The question raised by the noble Earl involved legal questions requiring consideration, and was confined to one point; and yet his noble Friend (Earl Fitzwilliam) had chosen that opportunity for making general remarks on the Irish poor-law, and for discussing the policy of emigration on a large scale, and the inefficiency of loans. The speech of his noble Friend involved, it was to be feared, that dangerous fallacy which seemed every day to prevail more and more in the minds of men, namely, that it was in the power of any Government or any Legislature by its fiat to give happiness and prosperity to a people. A Government could not mistake its functions more than if it were to suppose it had the power of imparting wealth and prosperity; they must be created by the people themselves; and those who taught the people of Ireland that they should look to Parliament and to the Government to relieve them from their present deplorable condition, did most lamentably deceive them. His noble Friend had accused the Government of doing nothing. What more could have been done? If the Government had succeeded by the measures they had passed in February in restoring peace to Ireland, they had done what was of inestimable value to the industry of Ireland, and it was now for the Irish people to work out their own prosperity. His noble Friend (Earl Fitzwilliam) had spoken of the millions of acres of waste land lying uncultivated in Ireland. But if the intelligent industry and capital which his noble Friend had assumed not to be wanting were ready in Ireland, there was no reason why the people should go to Canada and Australia, while without capital their removal to those distant countries would not improve their condition. In a few days he should lay on the table papers connected with this important subject of emigration, and he should take the opportunity that would then be afforded him of showing that more had been done in that direction than his noble Friend imagined. Measures of great importance on this subject were now in progress, and he hoped that the Government would be able to go on with yearly increasing efficiency in improving and extending emigration. He denied the justice of the representations against the Irish Poor Law, and he thought that the accounts of the working of that law were quite as satisfactory as could reasonably have been expected. It was already acting as a stimulus to industry and improvement in that country. With regard to the actual Motion before the House, he thought the arguments already urged against the appointment of a Committee were quite sufficient. The matters into which it was proposed to inquire were about to be taken before the courts of law, and it was not, therefore, a proper moment for Parliament to interfere. When the courts of law had decided upon the question, the noble Lord could bring the matter before Parliament if he pleased.

Lord STUART DE DECIES regretted that more attention was not paid in Parliament to the wishes of the Irish people as expressed through their representatives. Those wishes had been expressed upon the Motion of the hon. Member for Portarlington (Colonel Dunne); and he had reason to believe that the rejection by the other House of Parliament of the Motion of that hon. Member had done more to advance repeal than the advocacy of its most strenuous supporters. His own experience of the working of the Irish poor-law was that it had failed to stimulate industry in that country. The views entertained by a large body of the Irish people were, that the system of relieving the ablebodied poor in Ireland should be altogether different from the mode in which the aged and infirm poor were relieved. His vote upon the present Motion would very much depend upon the announcement by the Government whether it was their intention to sanction next Session an inquiry into the working of the new poor-law in Ireland,

Lord BEAUMONT was both surprised and sorry that the Committee, for which so good a case had been made out, had been refused by the Government. What was the ground upon which inquiry was refused? Because a case was depending before the courts of law. But cases might be depending at all times; and it was never imagined that the inquiry they would go into would have anything to do with the particular question now before the courts of law. The inquiry would be directed to ascertain what were the hardships in the working of the new poor-law; and their Lordships would then see whether they were owing to defects in the law, or to the cruelty of its administration. The Government seemed to wish not to disturb the operation of the law, because it had been recently passed, and some time, therefore, was necessary to judge of its operation. So far as that went the argument was good; but when a distinct case was made out which demanded inquiry, he thought that that inquiry should be conceded.

The Earl of DEVON said, that the inquiry asked for was not, as he understood, to be general, but was to be an inquiry into the operation of a particular part of the law. The fact was that the noble Earl called upon their Lordships to institute an inquiry into a case which was at that moment undergoing legal consideration, and the first question that would be put to the witnesses examined would be, "Are there not legal proceedings at this moment pending between the Poor Law Commissioners and the noble Earl?" His noble Friend near him seemed to think that on the whole the poor-law was working well in Ireland. He very much hoped that that was the case. But this he knew, that in many parts of Ireland it was not so; and it might be a very proper subject for inquiry what were the causes which enabled it to work well in some parts of the country, and not so in others. He had had a long correspondence with the Commissioners upon the subject of the electoral divisions, which he considered to be too large; and he thought that some arrangement might be made, so as to enable the proprietors of land to furnish employment to the population, and thereby escape the enormous taxation of providing for them. The Commissioners certainly entered fully into the discussion of the subject, but they decided that it would not be wise so to arrange the electoral divisions, One argument was that it was unwise to make them consist of a very small number of proprietors; and yet there were electoral divisions that were made by the Commissioners themselves, consisting of the property of only one or two proprietors.

Lord CAMPBELL said, they were not considering whether the policy pursued with regard to Ireland had been wise or unwise—they were not considering whether the Union ought to be preserved or not—whether the poor-law of Ireland was politic or impolitic, or whether an inquiry into the operation of the poor-law might or might not be advisable. There were many arguments which might be urged to show that such an inquiry would be highly expedient; and he did not know whether the Motion said to have been made elsewhere had been properly or improperly rejected: but the sole question their Lordships had to decide was, whether they ought to grant a Committee to inquire into a single question as to the law of rating immediate lessors? Had any case been made out to justify such an inquiry? It might be, as he had just said, highly expedient to have an inquiry into the general operation of the law in Ireland; but the question was, whether the noble Earl had laid before their Lordships a sufficient case to induce them to grant his Motion. He (Lord Campbell) would merely say that, if they did agree to the Motion, they would be establishing a most dangerous precedent, and would be departing from those principles which had uniformly guided them hitherto, for the simple reason that it happened that one of their Lordships was a party to some pending litigation. With respect to the question itself, it was a very difficult one, and one upon which opinions might very fairly be divided; and it seemed to him that the guardians who had raised the action against the noble Earl, so far from acting vexatiously in the course they had pursued, had acted with great propriety in seeking to have a question of so much importance fairly tried by the regular tribunals of the country.

Lord MONTEAGLE contended, that to wait for the decision of the courts of law upon the point in question would be attended with very great delay, while, in the meantime, Ireland would be left without a remedy for the evil complained of. But it was said that to grant an inquiry while the case was pending in the courts of law, would be a precedent the more fatal as coming from the House of Lords. Why, what did their Lordships do in the case of the *qui tam* actions? Did they wait for the decision of the courts of law there? No, they settled the question at once by legislation. To refuse inquiry in the present instance would be the more unjust, considering that the Motion for a general inquiry into the working of the poor-law, which was supported by seven out of every eight of the Irish representatives in the other House of Parliament, had been rejected by a majority of the British Members, contrary to the almost unanimous opinion of the Irish people. As a friend to the Union—as a friend to British protection, he dared not refuse the inquiry now asked for; and he called upon the English Members of their Lordships' House, who might be apt to undervalue the importance of the question, not to do anything which would operate as a bar to inquiry or to legislation upon it.

Lord CAMPBELL explained. He considered it a question which ought not to be decided by a Committee of their Lordships' House, but by the regular tribunals of the country.

The Marquess of CLANRICARDE remarked upon the extreme difference between the Motion and the arguments which had been used in the debate. Almost all the speakers in support of the Motion went, not into the operation of the law as it existed, but entirely into the administration of the law. The noble Earl (the Earl of Lucan) complained that the law operated oppressively upon him; and yet, almost in the same breath, he contended that, under the law, he was not liable to the rates charged against him. It appeared, then, that it was the difficulty of appealing from the administration of the law of which he really complained; but this could easily be remedied by a short Bill. He entirely agreed as to the desirableness of acceding as far as possible to the wishes of the Irish people and the landed proprietors; but he denied that there was anything like a strong or unanimous opinion in Ireland upon the particular point raised by the present Motion, though he admitted there did exist a powerful and deep feeling with regard to the general subject, which it would be well if their Lordships would attend to; and he ventured to say on the part of the Government, that if the country were in a calmer state—if it were in its ordinary condition, when the whole question could be fairly inquired into, there was no indisposition whatever on their part to grant a Committee of Inquiry. But to grant a partial inquiry into a point upon which a Member of their Lordships' House considered himself aggrieved, so far from this being calculated to conciliate the people in favour of the principle of the poor-law, it would only go to shake their confidence both in the law and in the spirit in which their Lordships were diposed to deal with it.

House divided:—Contents 33; Not-Contents 27: Majority 6.

List of the NOT-CONTENTS.

DUKE.
Leinster

MARQUESSES.
Clanricarde
Lansdowne
Northampton

EARLS.
Auckland
Besborough
Devon
Fingall
Fortescue
Grey
Granville
Huntingdon
Minto
Scarborough
Sefton
Stafford

BISHOPS.
Hereford
Manchester
Peterborough

LORDS.
Arundel
Camoys
Campbell
Cottenham
Hastings
Saye and Sele
Stuart de Decies
Sudeley

Resolved in the *Affirmative.*

ADDRESS OF CONDOLENCE TO HER MAJESTY.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE rose to move an address of condolence to Her Majesty on the recent death of the Princess Sophia. In consequence of the House not sitting yesterday he had been unable to give notice of this Motion; but there were instances in which such Motions had been made without previous notice, and, under all the circumstances of the case, he was certain that he should be only expressing the feeling which animated all their Lordships when he moved an address of condolence to Her Majesty on account of the loss which She and the rest of the Royal Family had suffered in the death of her late Royal Highness the Princess Sophia, who was endeared to all who knew her by the virtues, charity, and excellence which she had displayed during the course of a long life. He therefore moved—

> "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, to express the deep concern of this House at the Loss which Her Majesty has sustained by the Death of Her Royal Highness the Princess Sophia, and to condole with Her Majesty on this melancholy Occasion, and to assure Her Majesty that this House will ever participate with the most affectionate and dutiful attachment in whatever may concern the Feelings and Interest of Her Majesty, and Her illustrious House."

LORD STANLEY felt quite sure that the noble Marquess had only consulted the unanimous feelings of their Lordships in taking, with or without notice, the earliest opportunity of conveying to Her Majesty the expression of the regret of the House at the lamented death of her late Royal Highness the Princess Sophia. He believed that her death had been a welcome relief to her from a long period of most painful bodily suffering; and the Christian resignation with which those sufferings had been borne, and the uniform benevolence and kindness of her late Royal Highness's character, had excited among all who were acquainted with the circumstances one universal feeling of respect and admiration. He was certain that her late Royal Highness's memory would long be cherished, not only by the Royal and illustrious Personage to whom the proposed address would be presented, and by a large circle of her friends, but also by a numerous portion of the humbler classes, who had had an opportunity of knowing, from their own experience, the kindness and benevolence of her late Royal Highness's character.

Motion agreed to *nemine dissentiente.*

EVICTED DESTITUTE POOR (IRELAND) BILL.

The MARQUESS of CLANRICARDE moved the Second Reading of this Bill, observing, that within the last few years there had been notorious cases of persons being turned out of their dwellings in Ireland without regard to hour or season, and it had been stated that some persons so evicted had perished by the roadside or in the fields. He alluded to the case of a Mr. Blake, but exculpated that gentleman from the proceedings which had taken place on his property, as they had been carried on without his knowledge, and had been put a stop to, as soon as he became acquainted with them. The object of the present measure was to provide that, before persons should be evicted, the landlord should give previous notice of his intention to evict, in order that the poor tenants might not be subjected to the privations which, under the present system, no doubt many had endured. There was also a restriction as to the hour and days on which notices of eviction should be given to the guardians of the poor. The other clauses related more particularly to the carrying out of the details of this Bill. It might, perhaps, be objected that the range and scope of the measure were too extensive: if that should be so, he could only say that he should have no objection, in Committee, to limit its operations.

LORD MONTEAGLE was favourable to affording means of succour and protection to evicted destitute persons, but objected to the Bill, as not giving a proper remedy. On the contrary, it would introduce difficulties into the law of Ireland, which would be infinitely more dangerous to the administration of the poor-law itself than even to the management of landed property. With respect to Mr. Blake, the noble Marquess admitted that he was not deserving of blame for what had occurred on his property; but had not Mr. Blake, nevertheless, been struck out of the commission on account of those occurrences? The present Bill was founded on two special cases; the one being the case of Mr. St. George, the Member for Galway, who had

had an opportunity of justifying himself; and the other the case of Mr. Blake, who was now exculpated. He thought their Lordships should be exceedingly cautious in respect to giving their assent to a general Bill founded on special cases. If, for the recovery of rent, distraining were resorted to, every one would at once see that the superior landlord must sell the effects of the poor occupiers, and thus the matter must be brought within the cognisance of the poor-law guardians. Now then, he would ask, what must be the consequence of bringing every case of ejectment under the notice of the poor-law guardians? There was a question which he begged to put, namely, whether the present measure had been submitted to the consideration of the Poor Law Commissioners, and whether his noble Friends who now constituted Her Majesty's Government were disposed to lay before the House the opinions pronounced upon it by those Commissioners? To him it appeared that the effect of the measure would be to create a new *status* of pauperism, which had never been contemplated in the previous condition of the law; for by this Bill they would give the evicted tenant a right that he could not otherwise acquire: for the Bill declared that shelter should be provided for him, and the right to enjoy that shelter might, perchance, last for the whole of his life; and, moreover, it was provided that, in addition to shelter, he should be entitled to relief outside of the workhouse; that he should, in short, possess the same rights as those enjoyed by the sick, the old, or those who were permanently disabled. Great efforts had, in similar debates, been made to affix blame to the ordinary Irish landlord; but he would lay before them a case in which the Crown was the landlord. He would read the particulars of the case from the extracts which he held in his hand:—

> "Case of the Crown lands of Ballykililure, 609 acres, 80 tenants, 463 denominations; population, near 500. On the 26th of May, 1847, the sub-sheriff of the county attended on the lands, and the whole of the fourteen defendants, with their families, were turned out of their dwellings, and their holdings were placed in charge of a bailiff. Their houses, with the exception of such as were required for the location of a party of twelve police, to prevent any attempt at repossession on the part of the evicted persons, were either levelled to the ground, or rendered uninhabitable."

The following was an extract from the petition of the evicted tenants:—

> "That on the 26th of May, your petitioners were turned out of their houses and dwellings; that they are now deprived of their cabins, and lying out in the open air with their wives and families, who are in a state of destitution and starvation for want of food and raiment, and are thereby subject to fevers and disorders prevalent in the country. That your petitioners, if they are deprived of their crops and tillage, will, with their families, be thrown on the world, and doomed to ruin and starvation; and they solemnly assure you that a part of the tenants so dispossessed are in a raging fever, lying in the open air."

Further, he should read an extract from the report of the Clerk of Quitrents:—

> "I conceive that under no circumstances whatever should any of those parties be restored to possession, or suffered to occupy any part of the land."

He also begged their attention to the report of the Woods and Forests of the 15th of July, 1847:—

> "A summary process of ejection was used by the sheriff of the county, when they were severally with their families, put out of possession, and their tenements levelled. Proceedings were still pending against the remaining occupiers, and in the event of their refusing to acknowledge the 'landlord's' rights, the same course would be pursued, by their forcible removal from the ground and houses."

The following was from the second report, March 10, 1848:—

> "It is the intention that every one of the present occupiers of these lands who shall not accept the offer of emigration shall be summarily dispossessed, under the injunction which shall be immediately issued, and their houses demolished. First emigration, 173; second emigration, 236; total 409 persons."

By whom did their Lordships suppose that those deeds were done? By no others than his noble Friends who now sat near him. By whom was the order for dispossessing these poor people signed? By no other than by Lord Morpeth, as Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests. In speaking of this Bill, however, he wished not to be misunderstood. He thought, with the promoters of the measure, that evicted tenants ought to be taken care of; but he did not think that this was the best mode of accomplishing that object; and in his opinion the plan of bringing it under the cognisance of the poor-law guardians would be a most effectual method of striking a formidable blow against the administration of the poor-law in Ireland.

The EARL of GLENGALL opposed the Bill, and contended that, if it became law, every case connected with the letting of land must be submitted to the poor-law guardians.

The MARQUESS of CLANRICARDE shortly replied, vindicating the principle of the poor-law. No person could be relieved under that law unless he was destitute, and he was relieved only so long as he continued destitute. He hoped, before long, no outdoor relief would be given in Ireland. No person ought to have outdoor relief until the workhouse was filled.

Bill read 2^a.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, May 30, 1848.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—*Reported.*—Tobago; Relief and Immigration into British Guiana and Trinidad.

Petitions Presented. By Mr. Gardner, Mr. Hume, and other Hon. Members, from an Immense Number of Places, for an Extension of the Elective Franchise.—By Viscount Castlereagh, from Inhabitants of the Town of Newtownards, and the adjoining District, against the Repeal of the Union with Ireland.—By Sir H. Willoughby, from the Rector of the Parish of Little Bowden, (Northampton), for Alteration of the Law respecting Charitable Trusts.—By Mr. Duncan, from Dundee, for Alteration of the Law respecting the Church of England Clergy.—By Mr. Bouverie, from Newport Pagnell, for Abolishing the Distinction between Ecclesiastical and Civil Courts.—By Mr. Cobden, from the Inhabitants of Lees, for Better Observance of the Lord's Day.—By Mr. Anderson, from Havray and Sandwich (Orkney), and by other Hon. Members, from several Places, in favour of the Places of Worship Sites (Scotland) Bill.—By Mr. Cockburn, from Williton, and its Neighbourhood (Somerset), for Repeal of the Duty on Attorneys' Certificates. By Colonel Kemeys Tynte, from the Parish of Stogumber (Somerset), for Retrenchment in the Expenditure.—By Sir Joshua Walmsley, from Members of the Primitive Methodist Chapel, Stroud, for Reduction of Duties on Tea, Coffee, Sugar, and Cocoa.—By Mr. H. Berkeley, from Bristol, and by other Hon. Members, from several Places, for Inquiry into the Grievances of Bakers.—By Mr. Boyd, from Members of the Loyal Kitty of Coleraine Lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Belfast, for an Extension of the Benefit Societies Act.—By Mr. Cobden, from Colliers and Labourers of the Parish of Denbigh, for Remedial Measures to Alleviate their Distress.—By Mr. Bateson, from Coleraine, for Alteration of the Imprisonment for Debt (Ireland) Bill.—By Mr. Anderson, from the Commissioners of Supply of Orkney, and by other Hon. Members, from several Places, against the Lunatic Asylums (Scotland) Bill.—By Mr. Moody, from the Guardians of the Poor of the Langport Union, Somersetshire, for Alteration of the Law respecting Mendicancy.—By Mr. Meagher, from the Parish of Kilculliheen, in the County of Waterford, for Alteration of the Municipal Corporations (Ireland) Act.—By Mr. J. H. Vivian, from the Town of Neath, Glamorganshire, for Retrenchment in the Naval and Military Expenditure.—By Mr. Loch, from Parish Schoolmasters within the Presbytery of Kirkwall, Orkney, for Ameliorating their Condition.—By Mr. Bright, from the Rector of the Parish of Monewden (Suffolk), respecting the Relieving Officer of the Plomesgate Union.—By Sir W. Clay, from Shoreditch, in favour of the Public Health Bill.—By Sir John Hope, from the Parochial Board of Newton, Mid Lothian, against the Registering Births, &c. (Scotland) Bill (1847); also against the Marriage (Scotland) Bill (1847).—By Sir R. Ferguson, from the Presbytery of Kirkaldy, Fifeshire, against the Schoolmasters (Scotland) Bill.—By Mr. Hastings, from the Guardians of the Woburn Union (Bedfordshire), for Alteration of the Law of Settlement.—By Mr. W. Forbes, from the Commissioners of Supply of the County of Stirling, for Completion of the Survey of Scotland.—By Mr. Frewen, from Ratepayers of the Parish of Battel (Sussex), praying the House to take the Turnpike Trusts into Consideration.

CASE OF MR. MITCHEL.

Mr. ROCHE said, that Mr. Mitchel had been tried, convicted, and sentenced; and he had been treated with a degree of harshness beyond that which was usually applied to the commonest convict in Ireland. He had been hurried from his friends and family. He wished to ask whether it was the intention of the Home Secretary and the Government to carry out in its full rigour that disproportionate and unjust sentence?

Sir G. GREY: I will say nothing whatever as to the epithets with which the hon. Member has thought proper to accompany his question. If I am to understand the question to mean "is the sentence passed upon Mr. Mitchel to be executed?" I have to inform the hon. Member that instructions have been given for carrying that sentence into effect.

MASTER AND JOURNEYMEN BAKERS.

Lord R. GROSVENOR, in rising to move for the appointment of a Select Committee to take into consideration the petitions of the master and journeymen bakers, presented by him to the House on the 3rd of April last, said, that, in order to explain his argument, he was obliged to lay down a general proposition; it was one which had been generally overlooked, by reason of the all-prevailing selfishness with which human nature was afflicted. If it were not for that failing, society would be carried on in a very different manner from what it now was. That proposition was, that all men, of all nations, were of one blood, and were all members of one great family; and that when one member of that family suffered, every member of that family, either directly or indirectly, suffered too. Now, if that were true of every individual relatively to the whole family of the world, with how much stronger force must it be true when it became a question of the suffering of a large class, relatively to the nation to which they belonged? If, then, he could show that a large number of persons—men engaged in the baking trade—were in a state of suffering, not from any partial or temporary cause, arising from their business, and which was likely soon to pass away, but from circumstances which had become normal as connected with the nature of their employment—he conceived he should have made out a case which the House could not lightly throw on one side. In order that the House might possess an outline of the case, he would refer hon.

Members to the petitions which had been presented, and printed with the Votes, and from which he would read a very short extract. The petition stated—

> "That the great number of hours—amounting to between eighteen and twenty hours a day—during which the petitioners were required to labour, prevented them from obtaining any mental or moral improvement, or even domestic enjoyment; and that the system of overtaxed labour, and of the devotion of an unnatural number of hours to business, in a confined, heated, and unwholesome atmosphere, not only destroyed their health, but rendered them old in constitution before they arrived at the prime of life."

It appeared that the number of journeymen bakers in London, Middlesex, and Westminster, was about 12,000. These allegations were contained in the petitions both of the masters and the journeymen; and he did not believe that they had been controverted. He had himself attended two public meetings held in the metropolis, where these facts were stated, and a discussion took place, but nobody controverted them. The question was argued before him, in his own house, by four bakers on both sides, and that discussion terminated in converting one individual who came there disposed to argue that the system of night-work was not injurious to the health of the journeymen. He was aware that within the last four or five weeks there had been two meetings of master bakers held on the subject—one in Surrey and the other in London; at which meetings resolutions were passed in contradiction to the statement of the petitioners whose case he advocated. He had proposed that a deputation of four master bakers from the city of London, connected with the trade, should meet four master bakers who entertained contrary opinions on the subject, in order that the question might be again discussed; but this proposition was demurred to by the gentlemen in the City, for reasons best known to themselves. The impression on his mind was, that those gentlemen were exceedingly doubtful as to the result of the discussion. The Motion which he now proposed did not contemplate anything else than that of ascertaining whether the allegations of the petitioners were true—whether they could be substantiated or disproved by evidence that could not be resisted. [The noble Lord read extracts from the evidence given by medical gentlemen before the Sanitary Commission, showing that the occupation of journeymen bakers, especially during the long hours of the night, was the most injurious and unhealthy of all employments carried on in the metropolis.] He had endeavoured to ascertain what was the opinion of those who might be supposed to be best informed on the subject as to the nature of this employment; and in doing so he did not seek his information from among the journeymen, but from the masters, who, one might suppose, would be satisfied that things should remain as they were. Some of them thought that exaggerated statements had been made; but almost every one of them stated that the present system of protracted hours of labour and of night-work was seriously detrimental to the health of the journeymen. It might be said, that if all these facts were so distinctly admitted, both by masters and men, why did they not enter into regulations themselves to remedy the evil, without coming to Parliament? The answer was simply this, that it was impossible. He did everything in his power to urge the parties to do so; but on their producing before him proof that no such arrangement could be effected, he consented to bring their case before the House. In these times of competition, it was impossible to make arrangements among themselves that would be binding on the whole body. He thought he had stated enough to the House to induce them to grant him this Committee: he had shown that the amount of toil endured by the persons engaged in the baking trade was excessive, and this amount of labour was undergone in places generally prejudicial to health: he had demonstrated that the result of these two circumstances was what would naturally be anticipated—an early decay of the vital powers: he had shown that in these days of close competition it was not practicable for them to make any arrangements amongst themselves, for it was impossible to frame regulations which should be binding upon all; and he should now sit down, were it not that he wished before he did so, to advert for a moment to one more topic which he thought not irrelevant to the matter in discussion—he meant the confidence of the working people in that House of Legislature. No one, he was sure, would attempt to deny that every vicissitude of fortune which this country suffered, was felt first, and more strongly, by the labouring classes; no one would be disposed to deny, that whilst property of all descriptions was fenced round with every imaginable protection, labour, which was in many instances the poor man's only property, was totally unprotected.

They might, perhaps, say it was impossible to protect it without entailing greater evils upon the operative, than those he sought to avoid; but in that case he would only say that he could not altogether subscribe to their view. Labour had no direct representative in that House; but though they were divided upon this subject, his belief was, that the great majority of the labouring classes were still willing to wait and leave power in the hands of those who were best fitted by leisure and education to master the great questions of State. They still clung to the hope that justice would be done them, and that eventually that principle which they thought had hitherto guided our councils—that, regardless of the condition of the producers, money-getting was to be stamped as the god of a nation's idolatry—would be abandoned, and that the precepts of Christianity would be allowed a share in the basis of our political economy. The Ten Hours Bill had done much to strengthen that opinion: he knew that confidence amongst those classes still existed. They should not, by refusing this Committee, throw away that sentiment towards them, which by granting they might retain and deepen. He was not an Utopian dreamer of the Louis Blanc school, who would assign the same reward to ignorance and intelligence, to assiduity and idleness: the working classes of this country repudiated such ideas. But they did ask, that when a case was made out of a condition of labour entailing suffering, and a remedy suggested, that they would not reject the prayer of their petition without inquiry, merely because some fallible human principle which they supposed to be involved in it, would, if pushed to an extreme, carry them into danger. He trusted this appeal to the House would not so be answered; but that by acceding to his Motion the House would incline the people to look for counsel there, instead of driving them to seek for leaders in more questionable quarters.

Sir De L. EVANS seconded the Motion. He knew well, whatever might be the opinion of the master bakers as to the ultimate result, that they were all most anxious that there should be an inquiry into the subject, in order to put an end to the agitation that now prevailed respecting it. The noble Lord did not propose any alteration of the law; but showing, as he did, upon the evidence of distinguished medical men, that serious grievances did exist, he proposed that the House should adopt some means of inquiry whether, consistently with the well-being of society, some measure of amelioration might not be carried into effect. He had had some communication with master bakers on the subject, who stated that in their opinion inquiry was necessary.

Sir G. GREY was sure that no apology was necessary from his noble Friend for the manner in which he had advocated the interests of those poor men whose petition he now desired to refer to a Select Committee; and he was also sure that there was no indisposition on the part of the House to listen to a statement of the grievances of the working classes, or to adopt any practical measure for their benefit, provided the House could see its way clearly to a remedy. In the present case, however, the strongest argument used by his hon. Friend who seconded the Motion was, that no attempt was now made to provide a legislative remedy, and that the petitioners only asked for an inquiry. He was extremely sorry to be compelled to oppose this Motion; but he did so not from any want of sympathy with these parties; but, in the first place, from the conviction which he felt that an inquiry into the allegations of this petition was not necessary; and, next, because he did not believe that the grievances of which the parties complained were within the reach of any legislative remedy. He had said that an inquiry before a Committee of the House was not necessary. He did not mean to dispute the allegations of the petition, though possibly some of them might be in some degree overcharged; but he did not rest his opposition to the Motion on that ground; and, therefore, for the sake of argument, he would admit them to be true. But he must remind his noble Friend that there had been presented to the House a paper to which he had himself referred, and which showed that no inquiry was necessary Two months ago he saw, in the presence of his noble Friend and of the hon. Member for Finsbury, a deputation of journeymen bakers; and in the conference which ensued there was a discussion upon the remedy for the evils and grievances of which they complained. He must say that there appeared at that time to be but little difference of opinion between his noble Friend the hon. Member for Finsbury and himself, as to the difficulty and the almost impossibility of providing any legislative remedy for these grievances. He told them that he did not think it would be possible to secure to the petitioners the benefits they sought by an Act of Parliament. They then asked him whether he would consent to an inquiry into the facts of the case. On that point he reserved his opinion, not being willing to commit himself hastily, either by saying that the Government would consent to an inquiry, or would oppose it. But he did tell them that the evils which the petitioners alleged appeared rather to involve sanitary considerations than considerations peculiar to the trade which they carried on; and he suggested that the inquiry should be intrusted to the parties who were conducting investigations into the health of the metropolis. He was glad to find that this had been done, for the Sanitary Commission now sitting, of which his noble Friend was a member, had actually instituted such inquiries, and had laid before the House that day the evidence taken by Dr. Guy, on the condition of the baking trade. This evidence had been taken in a very satisfactory manner; and the Commission was still sitting and prosecuting its inquiries. He asked, then, whether it would not be better that the Commission, with a view to the removal of the evils complained of by the petitioners, should conduct the inquiry which they had commenced, and prosecute it to a termination, and that afterwards his noble Friend should lay before the House any measure which he thought necessary to remedy the grievances which he had brought under the attention of Parliament? The Committee, if appointed, could only re-examine those witnesses who had already been examined by Dr. Guy, and who had given their evidence in a very satisfactory manner. But what he objected to still further was, in regard to bringing these matters before a Committee, that granting a Committee implied an opinion that some legislative remedy might be provided. Now, looking at the evidence taken by Dr. Guy, he confessed himself unable to perceive any legislative remedy whatever for these grievances. He must say, that with every disposition to listen to these complaints—a disposition in which he was sure the House fully participated—they would raise false expectations if they appointed a Committee avowedly with a view to a legislative remedy, when in the opinion of the Government a legislative remedy could not be applied to this species of grievance. Dr. Guy alluded not only to the bakers, but to the knife-grinders of Sheffield, and the compositors, who when spoken to on the subject were in the habit of saying that "they could only die once." If, then, the House consented to this Motion, could they refuse to grant Committees of Inquiry into the allegations of petitions presented by those other classes of persons? His noble Friend had referred to the Factory Act, and, without wishing to raise any discussion now on the policy of that measure, he certainly must say that he did not regret the course which he had taken in regard to that Act. But it must be recollected that, in carrying out the provisions of that Act, facilities existed which would not be found in the present instance. The mills were easily visited from time to time by inspectors; but where there were two or three bakers' shops in one street, and two or three in another, with an occasional shop here and there, it would be impossible to secure efficient inspection. If an information were laid against a master for employing his journeymen more than twelve hours, the answer to the information would be, that the temperature at that particular time was very low, or that the yeast was indifferent; and this would defeat the information. He believed that there was an infinitely better mode of removing these evils by arrangements which might be entered into between the journeymen and the masters, and upon which, as he understood, they were pretty well agreed already. He should recommend his noble Friend, who, he thought, had acted under the impulse of a mistaken benevolence, to prosecute the inquiry before the Sanitary Commission, and not to hold out hopes of a legislative remedy to these poor people, unless he was prepared to lay on the table of the House a Bill of which he thought he could carry out the provisions.

Mr. STAFFORD had heard the speech of the right hon. Baronet with great regret, for although the skill with which he had met the arguments advanced in favour of the Motion might convince the majority of that House, they would not convince the majority of the working classes out of doors that Parliament had any regard for their interests. The petition was to be rejected upon two grounds: first, because the noble Lord did not propose any legislative remedy; and, next, because the petition was in some respects faulty. The *animus* of the Member who moved for a Committee of Inquiry always formed one of the reasons for refusing or granting a Committee; and the *animus* of his noble Friend appeared to him to present a strong ground for granting it in the present instance. If his noble Friend obtained his Committee, and called these poor men before it, in order to ask them what remedy they themselves would suggest, he would at least have it in his power to say to them that it was not owing to any want of philanthropy that a remedy was not devised, but to the sheer impossibility of carrying out any efficient measure on the subject. The right hon. Baronet said that the remedies proposed were either impossible, or would aggravate the evils of which the petitioners complained. That might be; but let those poor people be shown that a remedy was not within the reach of the House. Because everything could not be done, was no reason why nothing should be done. The right hon. Baronet said that an inquiry was going on before the Sanitary Commission; but he apprehended that this could not extend to the question of hours, which was far beyond their province. [Sir G. GREY: They have gone into that question.] He was aware that this question had been raised in the evidence taken by Dr. Guy; but the right hon. Gentlemen knew very well, that questions and answers were frequently put and made before a Committee which were, so to speak, beyond the order of reference or instruction to that Committee. Dr. Guy stated that, in consequence of the facility of setting up bakers' shops, no capital being required, and the great mortality among bakers, the wages of journeymen were diminished instead of being increased. People came up from the country fresh and fresh, and 15*s.* or 17*s.* a week was all they got. He must ask, how long it was likely that these hardworking men would be satisfied with the present state of things, if an inquiry into the allegations of their petition were not granted? The Coalwhippers' Act was an interference by Parliament for the protection of labour; and he would ask whether the recent trial of the loyalty and good feeling of that part of the population had proved that the Act had worked ill? This Committee could not be a long, laborious, or expensive Committee; and the only objection to it was, that it would raise expectations which could not be realised; but the two Members who had brought this subject forward had stated it as their honest opinion that the refusal of this Committee would only tend to strengthen the convictions of the petitioners. As his noble Friend had explicitly declared, in a speech that would be read with interest and gratitude by those whose interests he advocated, that it was not without hope that he moved for this Committee, so he believed that the refusal of it by that House would be felt all the more unkindly by those for whose interests it had been proposed.

MR. LABOUCHERE said, he had always thought that he best showed his respect for the working classes by refusing to join in any proposal that was calculated to encourage delusive hopes on their part. The question really before the House was, whether they would attempt by law to limit the hours of adult labour—not labour in factories, but labour in workshops, widely scattered; and any step, therefore, proposed to the House which would encourage the hope that such a thing was practicable, he would never fail to deprecate. He believed that it was possible, in the case of factories, to have inspection; but he would ask if it would not be intolerable and impossible in a free country such as this to apply to labour in dwelling-houses and workshops a minute system of inspection and revision, such as was found practicable in our factories. It would be utterly impossible; and, in his opinion, that objection was fatal to any system that included such interference between the employers and the employed. The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Stafford) had spoken of the coalwhippers; and he was ready to admit that much good had attended the measure which had been carried with regard to that class of workpeople. But there was no analogy between the case of the coalwhippers and that of the bakers. There was no limitation of the hours of labour among the coalwhippers; but, being an organised body, who laboured in a limited space, they were easily subjected to inspection. The case of the bakers, however, was totally dissimilar, and could not be brought under the same rule. On these grounds he felt it his duty to oppose the Motion of his noble Friend.

MR. M. MILNES could not help thinking that at this moment, when all subjects connected with the relation which labour and capital had to each other, were exciting so lively an interest in the world in general—when questions which they regarded as irrevocably fixed, were, by other persons, whose intellect they had no right to despise, and whose benevolence they had no reason to doubt, regarded at least, as questions for discussion—he repeated, that he thought the House ought to be scrupulous about placing theories of any kind, however apparently reasonable or scientifically certain, in opposition to the desire of any large body of their fellow-subjects. He asserted that while there were Members in that House ready and willing to serve on those Committees, and who regarded such questions with anxious interest, as did also a large body of persons out of the House, those questions possessed a great importance, and he believed that great good would result, if it only consisted in bringing these different classes together. He thought the House would do wisely not to regard the point raised by the right hon. Baronet, that no legislative result would be likely to accrue; for the question was simply—"Is the inquiry itself advisable or not?" He thought that if the manner in which it had been brought forward, the respectable body of men whose interests were at stake, the number of persons in the House who did not think much of the time and trouble an investigation would require, were all looked at, Her Majesty's Government would be placed in an unfortunate position if they opposed it only because they thought their motives might be misunderstood by the country. He saw no objection to the appointment of the Committee; and, without presuming to prejudge the conclusion to which it might arrive, he would heartily support the Motion.

Mr. HUME was of opinion that no Committee ought to be appointed on any subject, unless the proposer of it was prepared to state definitively the object in view. If the inquiry was not to lead to some declaredly beneficial result, why should the time of the House be wasted in discussing whether it was advisable to grant it? Neither the noble Lord the Member for Middlesex, nor the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Westminster, had even hinted at the possible remedy which a Select Committee might recommend. The hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Milnes) had not ventured to suggest any remedy which it was likely a Committee would propose. That hon. Gentlemen had been lately visiting Paris, and he feared he had imbibed the principles and had become one of the pupils of Louis Blanc, as he appeared to be of opinion that matters of this sort ought to be discussed in Parliament. Look at the condition of Paris—to what a condition was it reduced in consequence of wholesale interference with labour! It seemed to him that if this Committee were granted, the House would be doing that in detail which had been attempted on a wholesale scale at Paris. He was acquainted with the wants of the journeymen bakers, and admitted that while their interests were unrepresented in that House they had a right to complain; but they were at liberty to make arrangements with their employers respecting the conditions upon which they were to labour. The noble Lord who introduced the subject must see that if this Committee were granted, he would open the door to interference between master and man in all other trades. Let the bakers meet their masters, and agree to work during the day instead of by night, and surely they could do so. He was an advocate for self-dependence in the labourer. Let him depend upon himself—let him have just laws—let him be free from the burden of taxes which he ought not to pay—let him have equal rights with other men—and let him settle the details of his trade with his master. Holding this opinion, he would give his support to the Government in resisting the Motion.

Lord INGESTRE, though no follower of Louis Blanc, considered that he would be only advocating a just cause when he supported the Motion of his noble Friend the Member for Middlesex. There was a great readiness at the other side of the House to protect capital as against labour. The Government had shown themselves anxious, at the instigation of capital, to interfere with the navigation laws; but they had shown no such readiness to inquire into the grievances of which labour complained. He believed that the time of the House would not be wasted by the appointment of fifteen Gentlemen to inquire into the complaints of those poor persons.

Sir B. HALL meant to support the Motion of the noble Lord the Member for Middlesex. Some short time since he had presided at a meeting attended by journeymen and masters, and perhaps the House would allow him very briefly to be the exponent of the principles he had heard from both sides. As far as he could learn, there was but one feeling among the journeymen—namely, that they were overworked, and that they thought inquiry ought to be made in order that Parliament might be induced to interfere in their behalf. The right hon. Gentleman had told them that this was a matter which might be advantageously referred to the Sanitary Commission; but he was not of that opinion, as he did not believe that any good would result from such reference. Considerable stress had been laid upon the case of the fustian cutters; but he believed that no trade could parallel that of the bakers, who worked twenty out of the four-and-twenty hours. He considered that the proposition of his noble Friend was the best that could have been brought forward. Agitation on this subject had been going on for some time —no one attempted to deny the existence of the grievance; and the only question was, whether Parliament should interfere, having already interfered with other descriptions of labour.

MR. GLADSTONE felt himself called upon to make a few remarks, more especially as allusion had been made to an Act which was supposed to form a precedent. He, for one, had taken great interest in the case of the coalwhippers, and was very far from repenting the course he had pursued with respect to that measure. The House would be very much misled were it to suppose that measure constituted a precedent for interference in the present instance. He should state very shortly what were the objects of that measure. A custom had grown up between the masters of coal vessels and the publicans, in that part of the city of London where the coalwhippers exercised their vocation, by which it invariably happened that the men whose services were necessary to discharge the coal ships were hired through the publicans. The publicans had come to be hiring agents. The consequence was the greatest demoralisation—a demoralisation which he should have said was complete, had it not been for the fact that the men were conscious of the servitude to which they had been reduced, and were unfeignedly anxious to escape from it. The Act did nothing to regulate wages or the hours of work; it did nothing towards the inspection of labour. All that the Act did was to establish an office and a public officer to control it; and it was required, under sanction of a penalty, that every one having a coal vessel to discharge should repair to that office for the purpose of hiring men. Even that provision was attended with subsidiary arrangements which were intended to exclude interference. Whatever might be the merits or demerits of that Act, it did not form a precedent. He wished to make this statement, because it was not desirable that the impression should go abroad that this House dealt unequally with different bodies of the people, doing that for one portion which it did not do for another. He should give his vote with great pain against the Motion. But he thought the country should know the principle on which the House decided this question—most interesting to a large and respectable body of the community—that the Motion, if refused, would be so in deference neither to any theory nor to any abstract ideas of their own having no reference to the practical interests of the people. The question was, what good was to be done by entering on this inquiry? To appoint a Parliamentary inquiry invested a subject with a different character from that which it previously possessed in the public mind. One could imagine two objects for which a Committee might be appointed. It might be legitimately appointed first to ascertain the facts; but that object had been attained already. The most pointed and painful facts were already before the House. They were so striking that he could not imagine the investigation of a Committee would add to the sum of those facts. The notice which the subject had attracted from the noble Lord and from Parliament might have an effect upon those who had most power in the matter. The great majority of masters in the baking trade who were disposed to put an end to the present discreditable state of things might find their hands strengthened; and the small minority might be shamed into arrangements such as humanity and justice required. But entertaining that hope, and being prepared to appoint this Committee, were different things. Another important object for which a Committee might be appointed was to suggest a remedy. Had any one suggested a remedy in the present instance? He understood his noble Friend himself had not gone beyond the very modest expression of a hope that the appointment of a Committee might lead to the suggestion of a remedy. But none who followed his noble Friend had even expressed that hope. Inquiry by a Committee of that House was an evil in itself, unless it were likely to lead to a remedy; because it went to raise expectations which Parliament was not justified in raising, if there was no probability that they would be fulfilled. The only remedy which suggested itself to the mind was a law restraining the hours of labour. Could any one seriously conceive that such a law could be passed? It would be so entirely abhorrent to the genius of the constitution and people that it would not be endured; the men, not less than the masters, would be up in arms against it till it should be repealed. Being of opinion that nothing remained to be ascertained by inquiry; not being inclined to think that there was any legislative remedy for the evil; believing, indeed, that they must look for a remedy to the parties engaged in the trade, aided a little, and perhaps rebuked a little, by the expression of opinion in that House—he could not but consider it his duty to give a negative to the Motion.

Lord D. STUART was willing to give his cordial support to a Motion which he thought the House would do well to agree to. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Montrose (Mr. Hume), who had opposed the Motion so strongly, seemed to think that the object of his noble Friend was to adopt the views which he justly said were most injurious, and which it had been attempted to introduce into France. The hon. Gentleman seemed to think the object was to raise the wages of the operatives. So far from this being the case, all his noble Friend demanded was a Committee to inquire into the social condition of those poor men, with a view to its amelioration. The right hon. Gentleman who had opposed the Motion on the part of the Government (Sir George Grey) appeared to think that Dr. Guy had exhausted the entire evidence that could be adduced on this subject; but he assured the right hon. Gentleman that, if this Committee were granted, other evidence of a most important character could be produced. It could be shown that the adoption of short hours would not tend to raise wages; that, on the contrary, a saving would be effected, because the quantity of flour which was now wasted in the process of manufacturing bread would be greatly diminished. He regretted extremely to hear the determination of the Government to refuse the Committee, for he was certain that the result would be to dissatisfy a large number of well-affected persons.

Mr. DUNCAN could state that scarcely any question had attracted so much attention among the working classes in the district with which he was connected as the question now before the House. This was a question of life and death. It appeared that a large body of the industrious classes were frequently working 20 hours out of the 24; and he thought it was not an unreasonable request to ask the Government to grant a Committee to inquire into the grievances of which they complained.

Captain PECHELL intended to support the Motion of the noble Lord the Member for Middlesex, on the ground that the House ought to be in possession of additional information as to the hardships of which these persons complained.

Colonel THOMPSON felt himself in a sort of dilemma on this occasion; but the principle to which he always adhered was that obligations must be kept. In the course of the connexion he had had with the working classes, he had frequently had his opinion asked on subjects similar to that now under the consideration of the House; and his answer had always been—"I should be misleading you very much if I gave you the smallest reason to think that, in my judgment, you would receive any benefit whatever from the measures you contemplate. It is not in this way you are to be helped; but, inasmuch as you have strong opinions and desires on the subject, I will not oppose you. If the results are good, I shall be glad of it; if they are not, I shall regret it; but you must move on alone."

The House divided:—Ayes 43; Noes 55: Majority 12.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL COURTS.

Mr. BOUVERIE, after presenting a petition from Stockport praying for the abolition of the Ecclesiastical Courts, rose to bring forward the Motion of which he had given notice on that subject. The Motion, he observed, was one of no little importance, inasmuch as it concerned a material branch of the administration of the country, which he thought he would be able to satisfy the House was at present a reproach and a disgrace to our law. He had endeavoured to frame his resolutions so plainly that no one could misunderstand their meaning, and so as to involve a strong and sweeping condemnation of the constitution and practice of the Ecclesiastical Courts of England and Wales. He proposed these resolutions to the House because he felt strongly impressed with the impolicy and wrongfulness of allowing abuses of this character, which had long been acknowledged and proved to exist, to remain unremedied, and because he saw no disposition on the part of the Government to endeavour to remedy them. There was no other practical course open to him to propose to the House. Inquiry was useless, because it was exhausted. All that could be done by inquiry had already been done. It would be perfectly useless for him to introduce a measure on the subject, which was necessarily one of much complication and detail; and, even if he were to lay a Bill on the table, he could never hope successfully to carry it through that House, much less through the other House of Parliament. He expected the Secretary of State to say—as was frequently said in such cases by hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury Benches—that the Motion he submitted to the House was an abstract resolution. He heard the right hon. Member for Tamworth (Sir R. Peel) say, the other day, that he thought the House ought never to accede to abstract resolutions, on this ground—that either the intention of the Mover was to found upon his resolution a simple measure, and that, in that case, it was better the measure should be laid before the House at once; or that the subject was one of great complication and detail, and in that case it was unfair to ask the House to commit itself to those details without knowing what they were. Now, if only a short simple measure was required to remedy these grievances, he should consider it his duty to ask the House for leave to bring in a Bill on the subject; but as the question was one of much complication, detail, and intricacy, requiring arrangements involving a great deal of attention and learning, he wished the House, by adopting the resolutions he proposed, to lay the basis of legislation, and to establish those principles on which a measure might be founded. During the last eighteen years, this subject had frequently been investigated, and, as he had before said, inquiry had been completely exhausted. Previous to 1832 a Commission, composed of the most eminent persons in the Church and in the profession of the law, including the late Archbishop of Canterbury, the present Bishop of London, the Bishop of Durham, the late Lord Tenterden, the late Lord Wynford, the late Sir N. Tindal, the late Sir J. Nicholl, and others, was appointed to inquire into the subject, and, after a lengthened investigation, they made a learned and able report, which, he contended, fully bore out the resolutions he was about to submit to the House. In 1833 the Real Property Commission, including Lord Campbell, Mr. Tinney, Mr. Hodgson, and Mr. Duval, investigated a large part of the subject—that which related to the testamentary jurisdiction of these courts, and they made a unanimous report strongly condemnatory of the system which was still allowed to exist. A Committee of that House, presided over by the President of the Board of Trade, also sat in the same year, and having inquired fully into the subject, they laid a report upon the table strictly in harmony with the report of the Real Property Commission. All that could be done by inquiry had been done; but the abuses which were pointed out in these reports still existed. It was true that attempts had been made by several Governments to remedy some of these evils: by the Government of Earl Grey, in 1834; by Sir R. Peel's Government, in 1835; by Lord Melbourne's Government, in the same year; again, by Lord Melbourne's Government, in 1836; by Sir R. Peel's Government, in 1843 and 1834; and, last of all, by the present Lord Chancellor, when in opposition, in 1845. The Bills introduced on these several occasions passed through some stages, but all came to an untimely end before they received the Royal Assent. He thought these measures, or some of them, might be supposed to have failed, because they did not go far enough; because they did not deal with the evil as one which it was necessary to eradicate; because they endeavoured to reconcile two interests which were wholly incompatible—that of the public, and that of those who claimed a kind of tenant-right to the abuses of these courts; because they attempted to conciliate the hostility of those interested in the maintenance of the existing abuses; because that hostility, though confined to a small number of persons, was combined and vigorous; and because the public, who were interested in the abolition of these abuses, did not come forward to support the Government, and to insist on the adoption of the Bills which had at various times been introduced. Between these "two stools" the attempt at reforming these courts had hitherto failed. His (Mr. Bouverie's) object in making this Motion was to stir up and incite the Government to make a vigorous effort to grapple and deal with this subject; and it was more especially incumbent upon the Home Secretary, because in 1844 he was the person who, then in opposition, moved the rejection of the Bill of the right hon. Baronet opposite (Sir J. Graham) on the distinct ground that the measure then proposed was inadequate. He (Mr. Bouverie) must contend that nothing short of eradication would sufficiently deal with the evils existing in these courts; and to substantiate this, and the resolutions he had placed on the Paper, he would briefly remind the House what these courts were, what they had to do, and how they did it. They consisted chiefly in the consistory or diocesan courts of the several bishops; there was one court in each diocese, and in some of these dioceses there was also the commissary's court, the commissary being a deputy of the bishop, and executing part of his jurisdiction in part of his diocese. There was likewise in each province the provincial court of the archbishop — the court of appeal from the diocesan courts of his suffragans. There were also scattered over the country a number of archdeacons' courts, exercising, by grant or prescription, a part of the bishop's jurisdiction. There was formerly a great number of courts called Peculiars; but they had ceased to exercise any jurisdiction, and were for the most part no longer, he believed, in existence. As to the law administered in the ecclesiastical courts, it was—

> " such canons, constitutions, ordinances, and synodals provincial, being already made, which be not contrariant or repugnant to the laws, statutes, and customs of this realm, nor to the damage or hurt of the King's Royal prerogative."

Such were the words of a statute of Henry VIII., upon which the law administered in these courts rested. How uncertain that law was, needed no stronger proof than the fact that the highest of our superior courts of justice only four months ago declared itself incapable of deciding what the provisions of that law were. The bar of these courts everywhere but in London was *nil,* with the exception, he believed, of York. Now, the bar here was a close monopoly. Nobody could practise in the ecclesiastical courts in London, unless he were a member of a close corporation in Doctors' Commons—a corporation, the privileges of which were confined to those who had taken the degree of doctor of civil law in one of our universities. The practice of these courts, therefore, was confined, not merely to those who had had a university education, but necessarily, from the rules of the universities, to those who were members of the Church of England; and, as was always the case in such monopolies, the result was doubly injurious —injurious to the profession itself in respect of its learning and its character, and injurious to the public who required its services. An eminent member of it, Dr. Lushington, when examined before a Committee of that House, was asked—

> " Are you of opinion that graduation at one of the universities is an indispensable requisite before being admitted to practise in that court?"

The answer was—

> " Not, in my opinion, certainly; on the contrary, I entertain a very different opinion. I think that the profession has undergone great injury from being so close a profession, and being accessible to so few persons."

But the more important consideration was, that the public was a sufferer. This branch of the profession was lucrative and honourable; and he would like to hear some good reason alleged in these times why this field for learning and talent should be closed to all who had not had a university education and become members of the Church of England. The Judges likewise must have taken a university degree; men like Lord Campbell, the late Sir W. Grant, Sir E. Sugden, the late Sir S. Romilly, could never either have sat upon the bench or practised in these courts. The Judges were appointed by the bishops, and it was entirely in the power of the bishops what should be the duration and amount of the authority delegated to them. There was no constitutional check upon them. By the Act of Settlement the Judges of the common-law courts were removable by the Crown on an Address from the two Houses of Parliament; and if one of those Judges were to misconduct himself, or prove grossly incompetent, Parliament would thus address the Crown, and he would be removed; but, however grossly a judge of an ecclesiastical court might misbehave himself, there was no such power of removing him from the bench. He (Mr. Bouverie) could not himself see how in these days any one could defend the position, that the appointment of judges exercising high jurisdiction upon civil questions, ought to remain in the hands of the bishops. He did not recognise any peculiar propriety or fitness in the bishops to make a good selection. Though he had not the same feelings of hostility towards bishops as were displayed by some hon. Members in that House, he could not help saying that in some very remarkable cases in the last few months eminent members of the bench of bishops had shown a total want of appreciation of the great principles of truth and justice. It was but a few weeks since a jury of the country found that one of them had been truly described as " a perverter of facts;" and another of them had had the candour to acknowledge that he had, as far as in him lay, affixed a lasting stigma upon the character of an eminent divine, without ever having read the book upon which that condemnation was founded. He (Mr. Bouverie) did not see, then, that bishops were peculiarly qualified to be intrusted with this high constitutional function. Neither did he think it conducive to the best interests of the Church of which he was a member that they should have this power, or that there should be this mixture of temporal and spiritual power, or exercise of temporal jurisdiction by spiritual persons. On the contrary, this was a source of weakness and embarrassment to her; and, instead of strengthening her, this and other branches of her temporal power interfered with her independence and marred her efficiency. As for the origin of these courts, they were the purest relics of Papal authority existing in this country—the monument of the great struggle for temporal domination which was carried on previous to the Reformation. The bishops, at the Reformation, in the great scramble for the property and authority of the Church, picked up and appropriated this portion of the Pope's power; and they had acted out what was said to be the true principle for a good Judge—that of extending his jurisdiction, for they did all they could, in the early period after the Reformation, to extend the authority of these courts to everything cognisable in the ordinary courts; and, but for the firmness of Coke and his brother Judges, they would probably have succeeded. From that time, indeed, to the present there had been a constant current of complaint against the abuses and maladministration in the ecclesiastical courts. In the commission for the reform of the Church issued by William III., it was recited, "that there were defects and abuses in ecclesiastical courts." Burnet, in his *History of the Reformation*, said—

> "Our ecclesiastical courts are not in the hands of the bishops and their clergy, but put over to the civilians, where too often fees are more strictly looked after than the correction of manners. I hope there is not cause for so great a cry, but so it is; these courts are much complained of."

In the last century there was an inquiry in the House of Commons into these courts; a petition was presented from Derby, he believed, complaining of the abuses and exactions in them; a Select Committee was appointed, a report was made, and a Bill founded upon it was introduced, providing a remedy for some of the evils, but unfortunately it did not pass the House of Lords. It was not, however, because they had been bad and inefficient in past times, that he complained of them, (they might have been very bad then, but useful and efficient now,) but it was because still at this day these courts were bad and inefficient, and in them bad law was badly administered by incompetent judges. If they were merely useless there would be ground of complaint, because, by means of them, a large amount of fees was annually extracted from the pockets of the people; but they had to decide some of the most important questions that could be brought before a tribunal. Take their matrimonial jurisdiction: they had exclusive jurisdiction in all suits for separation from bed and board, or for nullity of marriage—questions involving the nearest social relations, the legitimacy of children, the peace and honour of families. In no set of cases could it be more important that the tribunal should have the respect and confidence of the public. Then, again, there was the testamentary jurisdiction of these courts, and it was most anomalous and monstrous. They exercised the exclusive right of pronouncing on the validity of all wills of personal property, which included money, stocks, plate, leaseholds, everything, in short, except freehold landed estates; but they had no judicial power enabling them satisfactorily to determine the rights of the parties claiming under a will, nor could they administer the property under the will. Hence the litigants, after getting a decision there on the validity of the will, and paying one set of lawyers, one set of fees and will of costs, had to go into Chancery to have their rights under the will determined, and thus to pay another set of lawyers, another class of fees, and another bill of costs. This was a grievance constantly and daily operating. In a petition presented to the House a few weeks ago, signed by 130 most eminent solicitors in Liverpool, it was stated—

> "That the civil jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts, especially in testamentary matters, proves almost daily a source of oppression and legal wrong to suitors. That your petitioners, in common with legal practitioners throughout the country, are often required to undertake all the labour and responsibility of civil suits, conducted in ecclesiastical courts, without being allowed to practise in such courts, or to receive any emolument for their labour, except by making separate bills; which to the suitors is the occasion of further expense, of great delay, and of increased vexation, loss, and other serious demage, which it is not in the power of your petitioners to prevent falling upon their clients."

Still further, these courts could not look at a will, as regarded real property—when there was real property, the decision with regard to the validity of the will was for a jury; and hence, occasionally, the very instrument which the ecclesiastical court pronounced invalid, on the ground of the testator's insanity, was by a jury pronounced valid as to real property. In Montgomery *v.* Clark, 2 Atk., 378, Lord Hardwicke said—

> "I have often thought it a very great absurdity that a will which consists both of real and personal estate, notwithstanding it has been set aside at law for the insanity of the testator, shall still be litigated, upon paper depositions only, in the ecclesiastical court, because they have a jurisdiction on account of the personal estate disposed of by it, I wish gentlemen of abilities would take this inconvenience and absurdity into their consideration, and find out a proper remedy by the assistance of the Legislature."

This absurdity, however, still existed and still worked injustice. He himself (Mr. Bouverie) knew an unfortunate man, of the name of Clark, who had been twenty-one years in the Queen's Prison, under the operation of that anomaly. Mr. Clark took possession of a large amount of real and personal property to which he believed himself entitled under a will; the ecclesiastical court held the will invalid on the ground of the insanity of the testator; the Court of Chancery held the instrument valid, and confirmed him in possession of the freehold estate, and yet was obliged, in execution of the judgment of the ecclesiastical court, to order Mr. Clark to repay the produce of the personal property, which he had spent, believing it his own. What could be more monstrous? Here was a man imprisoned for a great part of his life on the score of the invalidity of an instrument, which the highest court of equity in the kingdom, that sent him to prison, actually decreed to be valid. Another branch of the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts was on questions of church-rate. All questions with respect to the validity of a rate were under their cognisance. Now, these were the courts of the bishops; the judges were appointed by the bishops; the greater part of the judges were clergymen of the Church of England; and yet it was into these courts that a Dissenter, disputing the validity of a church-rate, must go and have that question decided. Would any one say that a Dissenter could feel the same confidence in the determination of such a court—the same satisfaction that full justice had been done him—as if the case had been before one of the common-law courts? The Commissioners, at any rate, did not think so, for they recommended that the jurisdiction should be entirely removed; but this, like all their recommendations, had been neglected. There was only one point upon which their recommendations had been attended to, and that was with respect to the jurisdiction of these courts regarding discipline and correction of manners of the clergy—the only particular in which the jurisdiction affected the bishops themselves, and where they found, to their injury, the expensiveness and dilatoriness and inefficiency of their own courts. In that particular they induced Parliament to assent to a measure which took them out of the jurisdiction of their own courts. For the Clergy Discipline Act, 3 and 4 Victoria, cap. 86, provided—

> "That no criminal suit or proceeding against a clerk in holy orders of the United Church of England and Ireland, for any offence against the laws ecclesiastical, shall be instituted in any ecclesiastical court otherwise than is hereinbefore enacted or provided."

The ecclesiastical courts had jurisdiction also in cases of defamation. By the returns made to the Commissioners it appeared that one-ninth of the suits litigated before these courts were cases of defamation—suits for the use of words imputing an ecclesiastical offence, but words which were not actionable at common at law. Ordinarily these suits were for words imputing incontinence. The suits arose mainly among the humbler classes of the people, and all who had experience on the subject united in bearing testimony to their being a very great and serious evil. The Chancellor of Exeter was examined upon this subject, as follows:—

> "Do you think it desirable that causes for defamation should be taken away entirely from the ecclesiastical court?—They are a very unpleasant description of suit, and I should think might be better settled elsewhere.
>
> "Practically speaking, do you believe they are productive of any good?—I should doubt whether they are."

So Mr. Granville Vernon, Chancellor of York:—

> "Are your causes of defamation principally or altogether among the lower classes of the people?—Entirely.
>
> "Are they often contested, or do they give an affirmative issue to the charge?—Usually contested. The existence of those causes is a very great grievance."

Mr. Ward, of Chester, answered:—

> "Would there be any great disadvantage to the interests of the public if those causes were entirely suppressed?—I think it would be a great benefit to the public."

The offences were often of the most trivial kind—not, however, that words of the kind in question, even though spoken in heat and anger, were to be defended; but the penalty imposed was far from being trivial. The returns obtained by the Commissioners showed that, in some of these cases, the amount of costs inflicted upon the unfortunate defendants must have been absolute ruin. These courts had no power to impose a penalty in a direct form, but only to make the party do penance in a white sheet, but they could impose payment of costs. He would particularise two or three cases. In the case of "Harris and Drew," tried in the Bishop of St. David's court, which commenced in 1827 and ended in 1829, the defendant was ordered to pay 33*l.* 10*s.* 10*d.*, and to be imprisoned until the money was paid. In "Joslin and Price," in the same court, began in 1828 and ended in 1830, the defendant was ordered to pay 30*l.* 6*s.* In "Elizabeth Hicks and Phœbe Gibbons," in the same court, begun in 1827 and ended in 1829, the defendant was ordered to pay 40*l.* 2*s.* 2*d.* The returns upon the table of the House showed that several persons were actually in prison for non-payment of costs, their periods of confinement ranging from twelve months to one month. The use of such language as formed the subject of these suits was, undoubtedly, unjustifiable; but it was monstrous to inflict such heavy penalties upon persons of a humble class in life, for a comparatively trivial offence. How it must confound people's notions of justice to see a woman brought before the ecclesiastical courts for having spoken words in heat, and subjected to a ruinous penalty; when, if that woman were brutally assaulted by a man, and should bring the assaulter before a magistrate, the utmost punishment which could be inflicted upon him was a fine of 5*l.*! Such a state of things was revolting to one's sense of justice. If it was right to make a person civilly responsible for the use of such words, let a right of action in the common-law courts be given; or if it was right to make it a criminal offence, let the offender be punished in the police courts of the country; but he begged them not to let this monstrous iniquity continue to be perpetrated in the name of the Church, and, as the phrase went, "for the good of the offender's soul." Having shown what was done in these courts, he would now inform the House how it was done. Upon this point he was able to adduce the best possible evidence, being that of persons of high authority, who possessed the best means of forming a judgment as to the mode in which justice was administered in the ecclesiastical courts. He would first take the diocesan courts, and would read to the House the judgment which the Commissioners passed upon those tribunals. The Commissioners said—

> "The diocesan courts are exempt from some of the objections which may be urged against the peculiar jurisdictions: but there are many reasons derived from the state of these courts in the present time, and the importance of some parts of the business arising there, which induce us to think that the transference to provincial courts of the jurisdiction hitherto exercised by them would be a great improvement in the administration of the ecclesiastical law. In the course of our inquiry we became early convinced of the impracticability of having judges duly qualified, together with a competent bar and skilful practitioners, to administer in the diocesan courts the testamentary and matrimonial laws, which involve matters of such very high importance to the parties litigant and to the public."

That was the general opinion of the Commissioners; now he would refer to the testimony of individual witnesses. The first witness was the Lord Chief Justice of England, who, in speaking of the ecclesiastical courts in another place, in 1844, said—

> "He would not enumerate cases of individual hardship; but there were some which would make their Lordships shudder. He had always been accustomed to consider these courts as nuisances, and he had never heard in any other court of cases of such extreme hardship as he had known of in these."

The next witness was a person to whose evidence on a matter of this kind no one could object—the Bishop of London. The right rev. Prelate said—

> "Now, with respect to the administration of some of the ecclesiastical courts, he must own that his experience of some of those courts had not given him the highest reverence for their administration of the law, and he thought it desirable that those courts should be placed on a better system, and a better administration of justice substituted."

A high judicial authority, now a Member of the Government (Lord Campbell), speaking on the same subject, observed—

> "He had had a rather extensive experience with respect to them; and he would venture to say he never heard a case before any one of these diocesan courts in which the grossest blunders were not made.—As to the cases brought from the archdiocese of York before the Privy Council, he could say, and he appealed to his noble and learned Friend (Lord Brougham) if they were not full of the grossest blunders, and constantly followed by reversals? ['Hear!' from Lord Brougham."]

Perhaps he had already adduced sufficient evidence of the incompetency of these courts; but, in order to strengthen this part of the case, he would quote the testimony of a gentleman whose opinions were entitled to the greatest weight in a matter of this kind; he meant the late Mr. Tyrrell. That gentleman said—

> "The inconvenience of the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical court has probably escaped the attention of the public on account of the small proportion of cases in which the validity of a will is disputed; but by the few persons who have had the misfortune to be involved in their proceedings, they are loudly condemned on account of the nature of their forms, their insufficient means of eliciting truth or doing justice, and their enormous expense. In the only two cases with the facts of which I am acquainted, 'Ingram *v.* Wyatt,' and 'Marsh *v.* Tyrrell and Harding,' I have the most perfect conviction that the sentences were wholly contrary to justice."

It might be said that the opinions to which he had referred did not apply to the principal ecclesiastical court of the country—namely, the court of the Archbishop of Canterbury, which sat in the metropolis; but it would not be difficult to show that court was not free from the objections which attached to the other ecclesiastical courts. A case had occurred within the last few months which had drawn the attention of the public to the Arches Court in Doctors' Commons. He did not refer to that case with the view of shocking the House by a repetition of its disgusting details, but in order to direct the attention of the House to what had occurred in the court on that occasion, between one of the most eminent advocates of the court—he believed he might say its leading advocate—and the Judge who presided on the bench. What took place was, probably, fresh in the recollection of many Members. There was an unseemly contest between the judge and the advocate, the latter openly imputing corrupt motives to the judge in the discharge of his duty. Sir H. J. Fust, the Judge, complained of the following interrogatory, which Dr. Addams acknowledged that he had drawn himself:—

> "Ask each witness, has not Mr. Nepean some, and what, family connexion, both with the proctors and counsel (or one of them) who are conducting this suit on the part of the producent, and with the judge in whose court it is depending; and upon your solemn oath has not the producent been buoyed or buoyed himself up (of course most fallaciously) wilh the prospect of its successful issue as resulting, or likely to result, from such connexion? Will you, upon your solemn oath, deny that you yourself have repeatedly heard, or have semetimes heard (or will you positively swear that you have never heard), the producent refer, either directly or indirectly, to the connexion aforesaid as the ground, or one of the grounds, whereupon he relied for a sentence in his favour in the result of this suit?"

Dr. Addams justified the interrogatory in open court, and said—

> "All I can say is, that it is an unfortunate state of things, even if it occurred only once; but it is of perpetual occurrence; I see a phalanx against me which quite oppresses me. I have borne it a long time."

On a subsequent day the Judge, in the course of a long speech, entered into a justification and defence of himself from the imputations which Dr. Addams had cast upon him. It must not be supposed that what Dr. Addams said on that occasion was merely the language of an angry advocate roused by the difficulties of his case. He held in has hand a pamphlet published by Mr. Craig, a clergyman of the Church of England, which cast similar suspicion upon the proceedings of the court. [Sir F. THESIGER said that the case to which Mr. Craig's pamphlet referred was at present *sub judice.*] He (Mr. Bouverie) was not about to refer to anything which could prejudice either of the parties in the case; his object was merely to show the suspicions which prevailed with respect to the court itself. The Rev. Mr. Craig, the writer of the pamphlet, was the brother of one of the parties in the case; and in the following passage he referred to one of his brother's acts:—

> "But one of his letters seems to have been worse than wrong—it was indiscreet. He ventured—in the contemplation of his gloomy prospect—he ventured to express an apprehension that he did not stand a fair chance in the Court of Arches, constituted as it is, and considering who were arrayed against him. This was unwise, and he has smarted for it. It was no doubt the expression of very needless and unfounded alarm, for they are all honourable men; yet it is possible that the proceedings and judgment in this case may make converts to his opinion. Many and serious are the complaints that have been made of injustice arising out of the family combination. Throughout this case, as it has seemed to me, and I have watched it narrowly (of the judgment I shall have something more to say presently), the interlocutory decisions have been very adverse to Mr. Craig. Whether they were so rightly or wrongly I cannot decide; but whatever may be said either in or out of that corner of the metropolis which goes by the mysterious name of Doctors' Commons, courts of justice ought not to be family preserves."

He begged it to be understood, that he expressed no opinion with respect to the statements of Dr. Addams and Mr. Craig; but he thought that what had taken place in court was a most unseemly and unbecoming occurrence between a judge, on the bench, and an advocate practising under him. As to the fact, however, which was the basis of the suspicion entertained against the court, there could be no doubt. On that fact he rested his case against the court. There was a monopoly of the bar, a monopoly in the practice of the proctors—and in both those branches of the profession were to be found intimate relations of the judge who presided in the court. He had no personal knowledge of Sir H. J. Fust; but he believed him to be an honourable, high-minded, and efficient judge, and it was part of his case against the court that, in consequence of the system which prevailed there, it was impossible to have a cause tried there without suspicion being cast upon the judge. The judge in that court exercised powers which no judge at common law possessed. He had no jury to assist him in the determination of matters of fact. The judge of a common-law court, in trying an issue of fact, was controlled and checked by the judgment of a jury of intelligent men. The judge in the ecclesiastical court had absolute power to determine matters of fact. That was not all; the judge in the ecclesiastical court had the most imperfect means of arriving at the truth. He could not hear the *vivâ voce* examination of witnesses. The practice was this:—The witness was examined in private by an officer of the court, upon the statement in the paper-pleading of the party who called the witness, who was then cross-examined by the officer from written interrogatories, framed by the other party before the examination in chief took place. All the advantages of cross-examination, and of observing the demeanour and countenances, the readiness, the hesitation of witnesses in giving evidence, were wanting in the ecclesiastical courts. He believed there was no mode on the whole so perfect for arriving at the truth with respect to controverted facts, as the *vivâ voce* examination and cross-examination of witnesses in open court. Such was the practice in our common-law courts. At any rate both methods would not be the best; and he felt sure that the latter was most in accordance with the notions and feelings of the English people. One important branch of the jurisdiction of those courts related to the registration of wills. They claimed the privilege of registering wills relating to personal property; and, as in these times everybody had personal property, it followed that all wills must be registered there. The will was deposited, and a copy made; and that copy, sealed by the court, and called the probate, was the evidence of the will on all questions, except as to the title to real estate. Of that the original will alone was the evidence. In point of fact, as far as succession was concerned, it was a register and depository of title. Considerable benefit had accrued from this arrangement, but its advantage would be greatly enhanced if it were properly carried out. The two great advantages of a register of title were security and accessibility. In both those points the system of registration in the ecclesiastical courts was most defective. [Here the hon. Member read extracts from the evidence of several persons examined before the Commissioners which fully sustained his statement.] The evidence he had adduced was conclusive that the registry of wills was insufficient, imperfect, and objectionable. But this resolved itself into a question of expense to the landed proprietor. This was, in point of fact, a burden on the land; it was a charge which ultimately fell on the person who had to make out his title, the vendor, or the mortgager, and was in many cases a considerable burden. Mr. Tyrrell, on this point, said—

> "This peculiar jurisdiction in respect to wills was an important cause of the insecurity of titles, and one of the most frequent and oppressive sources of expense on the alienation of real property."

But though a burden on landed property, it was extremely profitable to the gentlemen connected with these courts. It afforded them the means of extracting a very considerable amount annually from the public in the shape of fees. By a return made to the House four years ago, containing an account of the fees received by the several officers connected with the ecclesiastical courts in England and Wales, it appeared that the total amount of fees received annually was upwards of 106,000*l.*, and that the amount received by the registrar's deputy-registrars was upwards of 60,000*l.* These fees were one of the main abuses of the ecclesiastical courts; and the existence of them was really the substantial difficulty in the way of getting rid of those courts. The parties who received them were naturally indisposed to favour any proposition for the destruction of a system from which they derived so large a profit. Many of the offices connected with these courts were sinecures, and some of them were lucrative. In the court of the Archbishop of Canterbury he found that the principal registrar received 7,588*l.* a year; and there were clerks of the seal receiving sinecure salaries amounting to several thousands a year. In the diocese of Chester the registrar enjoyed 7,155*l.* a year. In the diocese of York the registrar received 2,636*l.* a year. Indeed, the document which he was reading to the House was rather a curious one. The names it contained of those who held sinecure places in the ecclasiastical courts formed a sort of index to the family names of the past and present bishops and archbishops of this country. Although he was not disposed to interfere with the present holders, or with what might be called their vested interests, yet it certainly was not right that the public should pay continually, without any hope of abatement, these vast sums for no sort of duty whatever. Besides, as a Churchman, he felt that these large sinecures so bestowed were not for the credit or advantage of the Church. The usual apology for sinecure offices had been that they afforded the means of providing a comfortable independence for persons who were eminent for their scientific attainments or theological learning; but he had never heard that any of these large sinecures had ever been enjoyed by any gentlemen who had so distinguished themselves. During the last fifteen years, since the evils of this system had been pointed out, nothing had been done to cut down the fees of these gentlemen. He would ask the House whether they were prepared, by rejecting the resolutions he was about to propose, to express their opinion that the public should continue to pay, without hope of relief, these large annual sums? He apologised to the House for the time he had occupied. The subject was not a very attractive or inviting one; but it was, nevertheless, a subject of great importanee to the public. But he would say to his noble Friend at the head of the Government, who on a late occasion had declared that the people of this country were not in favour of constitutional and political reforms— [Sir G. Grey: No, no!] He understood his noble Friend, who was not now in his place, to profess himself adverse to great political changes such as those which were about to be proposed by the hon. Member for Montrose, believing that the people were equally opposed to change. Now, he would say to that noble Lord that he would be going a great way in establishing the people in that conviction if he would show them that whenever any practical abuses and grievances were pointed out, there existed a readiness on the part of the Government to remedy them. Those were the ends they were all seeking. Political changes were merely the means to those ends; and if Government and Parliament would show a vigorous determination to apply an amending hand to these abuses they might depend upon it they would take the sting out of the Motion which his hon. Friend the Member for Montrose was about to bring forward. The hon. and learned Gentleman concluded by moving the following Resolutions:—

"That the Ecclesiastical Courts of England and Wales have been the subject of several public inquiries, which have shown them to be totally incapable of fulfilling the important functions they affect to exercise:—That these Courts have not only to decide questions concerning some of the most important civil rights of the subject, but they exercise a criminal jurisdiction, pretended to be *pro salute animæ*, which touches his property and personal liberty:—That the law they administer urgently requires amendment:—That their system of procedure is incompatible with the effectual attainment of the ends of justice:—That they are not only inefficient but costly:—And that their continued existence is injurious to the subject, and a scandal to the judicial system of the Country."

Sir G. GREY did not intend to occupy the time of the House by following his hon. and learned Friend through the details of the speech which he had just addressed to the House. He certainly did not rise for the purpose of controverting those arguments which he had so ably urged, nor to contest those proofs which he had adduced to the House, and on which he insisted that there should be introduced some extensive change in the condition of the ecclesiastical courts of this country. He had had on more than one occasion an opportunity, of which he had availed himself, to express his views on this subject. He believed that the present state of the ecclesiastical courts justified most of the comments that had been made on their condition, and he was disposed to agree with very much that had fallen from his hon. and learned Friend. The object with which this Motion had been submitted to the House was stated by his hon. and learned Friend to induce the Government to take this matter up. His hon. and learned Friend had at the same time stated what was perfectly true, namely, that this subject was complicated in its details, and such as he, as an individual Member of Parliament, shrunk from grappling with by introducing a Bill. The failures of successive Governments to introduce a perfect Bill on this subject, for the purpose of effecting a reform in the ecclesiastical courts of this country, justly deterred his hon. and learned Friend from undertaking so great a task. He admitted that it was a notorious fact that many inquiries had taken place into these ecclesiastical courts. There was an inquiry, which was conducted by Commissioners established by the Government of the Duke of Wellington in 1829, who made their report in 1832. There was a subsequent report of another body on this subject, that of the Real Property Commission, to which his hon. and learned Friend had adverted, and which contained distinct recommendations on this question, namely, the abolition of these diocesan ecclesiastical courts, and the transference of their jurisdiction to the other courts of the country. A Select Committee of the House of Commons, and subsequently of the House of Lords, had sat upon the subject of these ecclesiastical courts; and both of those Committees most distinctly recommended a very extensive change in the constitution of these courts, and the nature of the jurisdiction which they exercised. He was quite prepared to agree in substance to the recommendations which had emanated from those successive bodies; but when his hon. Friend said that he (Sir George Grey) was especially bound to take up this matter, because he was a principal opponent of the Bill introduced by the right hon. Gentleman who was his predecessor in office, he must say that accusation was not a very just one, for the Bill introduced in 1843 was founded upon principles similar to that affirmed in the recommendations of their Committees. He voted in favour of the second reading of that Bill. That Bill was afterwards committed *pro formâ*, and underwent extensive alterations, which he certainly thought a departure from the principle of the Bill as originally introduced. There was then no indisposition on the part of that House to entertain the Bill, although extensive modifications were made in it by the Committee. But in consequence of the formidable opposition which was raised to it out of doors, the Government, whose hands were full of other business, found it very difficult to deal with the question at such a period of the Session, and the Bill was withdrawn. With regard to the Bill of 1844, he did not think that it had the appearance of ensuring an effective and national reform in these courts; and on that ground, because of the inefficiency of the measure, it was that he opposed it. He voted in the minority against the second reading of that Bill; and if he remembered rightly, that Bill was abandoned, and no further steps were taken in consequence of the manner in which it had been dealt with on the second reading. But the present Government had lately been paying careful attention to this subject; and his hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General had been engaged for some time in the preparation of a Bill which he would have submitted to Parliament in the course of the present Session had the Government any prospect of securing time and attention for the consideration of its details. He was sorry to see in modern times a prevailing disposition on the part of the House of Commons to think that every measure of importance must be taken up by the Government in one Session. The result of that was, that towards the end of the Session, the Government was overwhelmed with measures, which were necessarily withdrawn for the purpose of being introduced at a more fitting opportunity. Of this he was quite sure, that looking at this matter and the difficulty by which it was surrounded, it would be quite impossible for him to succeed in carrying a measure founded upon it in the present Session. He must say, therefore, that he thought it would be the wiser course to reserve its consideration to a future Session of Parliament. He agreed, as he said before, very much with what had fallen from his hon. and learned Friend. He agreed with him in many of the objections which he had urged against the present system. But he could not at present agree to the adoption of the resolutions which he had proposed, inasmuch as they affirmed that the proceedings in the ecclesiastical courts were a public scandal, and that the courts ought at once to be abolished. He could not, he said, agree to such resolutions when he had not a measure prepared to remedy the evils affirmed to exist. He would rather content himself by recording his declaration, that Her Majesty's Government considered that the courts needed an alteration, and expressing his hope that a Bill would be proposed by them in the next Session of Parliament. He hoped that the Government might then be able to carry out its intention. The delay that would occur between this and the succeeding Session would afford an opportunity of giving the most ample and careful attention to this very important subject. Under the present circumstances, he would content himself with moving the previous question.

SIR R.H. INGLIS said, the hon. Member for Kilmarnock might congratulate himself on the triumph which he had already gained without having taken a division on this subject. For, as in the case of the hon. Member for Cockermouth on a former occasion, so in the present instance, the object of the Motion had been gained even without a battle. He did not blame his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for any inconsistency in the course which he had adopted in the present instance, as contrasted with former proceedings; because he admitted that the right hon. Gentleman, in opposition and in office, had given his sanction to the abolition, or at least to a great alteration of the system, of ecclesiastical courts in this country. When, however, his right hon. Friend pledged himself and the Government to the introduction of a measure for remodelling the ecclesiastical courts of England and Wales, it was hardly necessary that he should remind the right hon. Baronet that he had undertaken a task which no preceding Government—however hardy in their attempts—had been able to accomplish. And in one word he could inform the present Secretary of State why former Governments had failed in this respect, and why his own attempt would also prove a failure. His right hon. Friend had attempted to take justice from the doors of every man in every part of the empire, and to centralise it after the modern fashion—not perhaps in Doctors' Commons—Doctors' Commons might be given up—but in London. A return had some years ago been obtained on the Motion of his hon. Friend the Member for Lancaster, their late Chairman, proving that there were at present throughout the country about 360 courts in which wills might be registered. Was there no practical advantage in that? And when the hon. Member for Kilmarnock told them that, under the present system, difficulty was occasionally experienced in tracing the wills of individuals, did he forget the advantage which the people in remote districts had of registering wills without being obliged to come to London for that purpose? Was it not advisable, for instance, that the people of Chester— [*Cheers.*] Who cheered at the word Chester? If he were not mistaken, he recognised that cheer to proceed from one who had never yet failed in his support of the ecclesiastical courts of England (Sir John Jervis). The hon. Member for Kilmarnock had alluded to the mode of examination by written interrogatories in the ecclesiastical courts. Were there no such interrogatories in the civil courts —in the Court of Chancery, for instance —and were not proceedings in the Court of Session of Scotland conducted in writing, which in England would be taken *viva voce?* The hon. Member had alluded to the local courts as depositories of wills, and had said some remedy was required. Now, he had had occasion to pay some attention to this subject, and from his inquiries and observation, he could state that in very many cases the wills in the country depositories were as well arranged, as accessible, and as free from dust, as any of the wills in the great repository of London. He happened to know the proportion of wills which had formed the subject of litigation, and which had been produced in the country and in London, and also the number of searches that had been made; though the statement might show that the present system was susceptible of improvement, it did not prove that it was one which produced those unmitigated evils attributed to it by the hon. Member for Kilmarnock. In four years the number of searches in London produced seven wills; in the same four years in the country thirty-six wills. In the same period there were eighty-eight searches for wills in London; in the country 1320. Another point to which the hon. Member had referred was with reference to certain offices which he described as sinecures. To one of these cases he thought he would, on a reconsideration of it, apply a different term. The hon. Gentleman had stated that the registrar of the diocese of Chester held a sinecure worth 7,500*l.* a-year. He would ask his hon. Friend the Attorney General, than whom no man gave a more honourable, consistent, and generous support to such local institutions, would he not still support that at Chester? He believed, as politicians, no two were more opposed than the registrar of that court and his hon. and learned Friend; but he would ask the latter whether the office of the former was correctly described when it was called a sinecure with 7,500*l.* a year? He believed the office of that court was as large and as extensive as any other provincial court, and was as well conducted. He had only heard of two instances in which its decisions had been impugned; and so far as the court of Chester at least was concerned, he thought there was no ground for the charges which had been made against the whole system. Then, again, at Exeter the administration of the chancellor there had always been such as to deserve the highest commendation. When it was said that all jurisdiction with respect to church-rates should be taken away from ecclesiastical tribunals, he would ask, was there not also a common-law court, before which the decision of such tribunals might be reviewed? and was not the latest decision of a common law court confirmatory of the decision of those who might be thought to be more specially interested in the preservation of that system with which those church-rates were concerned? Then, again, with regard to the question of their jurisdiction in cases *pro salute animæ*, he would ask would it be right to leave such questions to be tried by a miscellaneous body of persons who might be entirely opposed to the principles involved in such cases? He hoped his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in that general and sweeping concession which he granted to the hon. Member for Kilmarnock, did not mean to invade that part of the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts, and that such cases as were now only to be tried by ecclesiastical courts were not to be thrown open to others, and that matters connected with ecclesiastical discipline should not be referred to individuals hostile to the Church. When the Government had made up its mind to grant all that the hon. Member for Kilmarnock might desire, it was not necessary for him to trouble the House at greater length on that occasion. It was quite clear, however, that no Bill would be brought in on the question during the present Session. But he would warn the present Government, in any legislation upon that question, unless they consulted the practical feeling of the country with respect to these local institutions, they would most assuredly fail, as they deserved to fail, as every Government had done for the last fifteen years, who had attempted a like project; and such was no great encouragement to any Minister to meddle with these matters. In conclusion, he warned them against any interference with existing interests, or any tampering with that great system which had brought justice in life and death to the habitations of the people of England as cheaply as it could be done.

Colonel SIBTHORP would have thought it a more satisfactory course if the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department had met the proposition of the hon. and learned Member for Kilmarnock—a proposition which he (Col. Sibthorp) would designate as another job —with a direct negative. He could not avoid thanking his hon. Friend the Member for the University of Oxford for the course which he had taken on the present occasion. The right hon. Baronet at the head of the Home Department had said that he would bring in a measure to meet the evils of which the other hon. and learned Member complained; but he could assure the right hon. Baronet that he would be as ready to meet with him and his measure as ever he had been, and he trusted the right hon. and learned Attorney General would also act in a similar manner, and join him in defeating such a proposition.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL, after what had fallen from his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department, announcing to the House that this subject had been maturely considered, and that a Bill was prepared, and would be introduced at an early period next Session, should not have ventured to trespass on the attention of the House if he had not been alluded to, both by the hon. Baronet the Member for Oxford University, and the hon. and gallant Member for Lincoln, with regard to the opposition to which he had been a party when measures were introduced for the amendment of the ecclesiastical law. During last Session a question was put to him by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Dorchester, whether he was prepared, following up the course he had taken in opposition, to introduce any Bill on this subject? He then stated that his attention had been directed long before he was in office to this important question. He believed, if the matter were fairly and boldly grappled with, a measure might be introduced for the reform of the ecclesiastical courts which would be perfectly satisfactory to all parties. He was not now about to enter into the details of the proposed measure;

but let him not be misunderstood. The Bill to which he had in part objected on a former occasion, as being based on the principle of centralisation, did not necessarily form the groundwork or the measure which he should propose. The two main objections offered to that Bill were, first, that it did not go far enough in getting rid of what was supposed to be an objectionable part of ecclesiastical law, namely, a shifting jurisdiction in *bona notabilia;* and, secondly, many thought it highly objectionable, when they proposed to take the common law to every man's door, that they should remove the ecclesiastical law to London. It was perfectly possible to meet the views of those who joined on either ground in the opposition to that Bill. He only wished the House not to presume that because the previous question had been moved, the Government were pledged to that Bill, or to the principle of that Bill, which was founded on the principle of centralisation, and which gave a shifting jurisdiction where there were *bona notabilia.* The question involved matters of great complication and detail; but he could assure his hon. Friend that not only had he given much attention to this subject before he was in office, but that since he had been in office he had prepared a Bill upon it, and that this Bill would even now be produced, were it not certain that it would provoke much discussion at a time when other Bills were on the table which it was important should be carried as soon as possible.

Mr. HUME expressed his concurrence with the resolutions proposed by the hon. and learned Member for Kilmarnock, particularly with the last of them. He wished the right hon. Baronet had allowed the resolutions to be affirmed; but it was satisfactory to find the right hon. Gentleman intimating a general concurrence in the opinions advanced by his hon. and learned Friend. He hoped that hon. Gentlemen who had come into the House since his hon. and learned Friend had delivered his speech, would read the details to-morrow, and see how important it was to put an end to family compacts or family parties in the administration of justice, and to the system of fees which prevailed in the ecclesiastical courts. There existed formerly separate courts in Scotland called consistory courts. A few years ago Parliament passed an Act by which all those courts were abolished, and their jurisdiction was transferred to the common-law courts—an arrangement with which the people of Scotland were very well contented. He hoped, therefore, that Her Majesty's Government would bring forward early next Session a Bill to transfer the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts to the common-law courts of this country.

Mr. AGLIONBY took it for granted that the hon. and learned Member for Kilmarnock would pursue the course usually followed on similar occasions. Having received a few civil words from the Government, he would no doubt accept a few promises, and the whole matter would end in smoke. As he (Mr. Aglionby) foresaw, therefore, that he should have no opportunity of recording his vote, he wished to state openly what his opinions on the subject were. He agreed with every one of the propositions embodied in the Motion of the hon. and learned Member; and he should just like to know what would be got by avoiding a division. He believed, that unless the public forced measures on the Government, they never would proceed with them in the way which the national interests required. It would be better that the Bill spoken of by the Attorney General should be introduced during the present Session, because then it might be canvassed and discussed before the next Session of Parliament.

Mr. HUDSON considered that the people generally were well satisfied with the ecclesiastical courts, because appeals from them were very rare. He should not, however, oppose any Bill which did not recognise the principle of centralising wills in London.

Mr. W. P. WOOD expressed his thanks to the hon. and learned Member for Kilmarnock for the service he had rendered, not only in his clear and temperate exposition of this case, but for his having obtained the assurance on the part of the Government which they had just received. It was deeply important to the best interests of that portion of the Church to which he belonged, that some steps should be taken at once to remove the enormous grievances existing in the ecclesiastical courts. He believed that the Church had suffered great damage by the existence of the miscalled ecclesiastical courts, or courts Christian, a still worse misnomer. It was therefore his anxious desire that the really spiritual jurisdiction of those courts should be placed once and for ever upon a broad and firm basis. In the matter of the administration of wills, the only reason in that case for ecclesiastical jurisdiction was papal usurpation. He thought it would be extremely desirable that the Bill which Her Majesty's Government had under consideration should be laid on the table, even though there should be no prospect of passing it during the present Session, in order that the matter might be fairly considered, so as to give them a hope of its being passed early in the next Session. It was precisely twenty years since he listened under the gallery to the speech of Lord Brougham, which, though of six hours' duration, was heard throughout with as much attention as speeches of a quarter of an hour of the present day. That speech was the foundation of a large number of legal reforms which had since taken place. One of the first effects of that speech was the establishment of a new court of appeal in ecclesiastical cases; but, with the exception of one other Act, which was passed in 1847, on the subject of certain peculiar jurisdictions—with those two exceptions, nothing had been done to reduce the continually increasing grievances of the ecclesiastical courts. It had been said that these courts gave satisfaction; but in cases of tithes and of suits for legacies where the ecclesiastical courts had a concurrent jurisdiction with the Court of Chancery—not the most popular court in the country—the Court of Chancery was almost invariably chosen by the suitors. To show the utter carelessness with which records were kept by the local ecclesiastical courts, he might mention that, some four or five years ago, a forged will was placed in the following manner among them. The person who forged it coolly took away the original will, and brought it home with him. By the aid of some chemical preparation he effaced the original writing, and inserted what he desired. Having done all this, he brought it back, and placed it among the records again. The fraud was not discovered until some contest arose respecting the will, and then a solicitor of one of the parties was sent down to examine it, when some of the original writing being traced, it was clearly proved that a gross fraud had been committed. Another proof —if proof was wanting—was a fact which came under his own experience. There were, at the present moment, on the records of several of the local ecclesiastical courts no less than sixteen forged transcripts of registrations of baptism; and there could be no cause of wonder that such was the case, as every facility for fraud was given by the officials. If a person asked for the transcripts of baptismal registration, the whole bundle was thrown down to him upon a string, and then he was able to search for what he pleased and insert what he desired; and that this opportunity had not been neglected there was ample proof. He could speak upon this subject, as he was interested in convicting a party for a forgery of this nature, who was transported for seven years. This party tore out the original page in the parish registry, in order to furnish himself with secondary evidence for the establishment of his case. What rendered this negligence the more annoying, was the fact that there was no process at law whatever by which they could get rid of the forged documents. There they were, and there they would stay for ever; and the only way you can get rid of their effect is to convict the parties of forgery, in order to damage the estimation in which they might otherwise be held. He was of opinion that they ought to withdraw the jurisdiction of temporal matters from the ecclesiastical courts. He was not prepared to withdraw any local jurisdiction. He only desired that temporal causes should no longer be a matter of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Let them make the jurisdiction wholly temporal. Let them give it to the county courts if it so pleased them; but at all events they ought to take good care that there would be faithful guardians over such important records. These were the only observations which he thought fit at that moment to make; but when the proper time arrived, there were many other suggestions which might be made upon the subject. He did think that it was all-important that the interests of the Church of England should no longer be mixed up with these courts, whose oppression was only equal to their inefficiency. He knew of a woman who had been locked up in the Ipswich gaol for a period of three years for a contempt of court in not paying costs of a suit; her crime consisted in her having said in a churchyard, "you stole my husband's frill." In conclusion, he would only express his trust that the Government would give their special attention to the subject.

MR. BOUVERIE: After what has been elicited from the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and seeing the general temper and tone of the House upon the subject, I do not think it is necessary for me to put the House to the trouble of dividing.

Motion withdrawn.

Previous question carried.

PAYMENTS OF REVENUE INTO THE EXCHEQUER

Dr. BOWRING moved the following Resolutions :—

> "That this House cannot be the effectual guardian of the Revenues of the State, unless the whole amount of the Taxes, and of various other sources of income received for the public account, be either paid in, or accounted for, to the Exchequer. That no department of revenue ought to be allowed to stop any portion of its gross receipts in their progress to the Exchequer, without the previous authority of Parliament. That no department of expenditure should be permitted to appropriate to the public service any other sums than those sanctioned by previous votes of Parliament, and that all receipts from sales of stores, or other sources, should be paid into the Exchequer. That whereas the expenditure of many departments escapes Parliamentary control, either wholly or in part, in consequence of paying their expenses out of fees or other resources, and of accounting to the Exchequer only for the balances of such receipts; and in other cases of applying to Parliament for grants to make up the deficiency of such fees or other resources, it is necessary, as a check upon abuse, and a security for the proper appropriation of the public monies, that such receipts should be paid into the Exchequer, and not be disposed of without the preliminary sanction of Parliament. That it appears by returns on the table of this House, that in the year ending the 5th day of January, 1847, the amount of 5,904,690*l.* 17*s.* 4*d.* 5-12ths. was deducted from the gross receipts by the various revenue departments in its progress to the Exchequer, and disbursed without the previous sanction of Parliament; and by sundry previous Parliamentary returns, that a sum of about the same enormous amount is yearly retained by the said departments, and is not paid into the Exchequer, nor subjected before its disbursements to Parliamentary control. That it appears by the said returns, that in the year ending the 5th day of January, 1847, the sum of 1,099,747*l.* 14*s.* 2¾*d.* was received by the various other departments, independently of Parliamentary grants, or issues from the Exchequer. That the amounts thus removed from the direct authority and previous control of Parliament, and which were not paid into the Exchequer, average nearly seven millions sterling per annum, and that nearly one-eighth of the gross revenues of the nation are disposed of without the interference of Parliament to sanction their application. That such a state of things is most unsatisfactory, and requires the earliest attention of the House of Commons."

These resolutions, which he submitted to the House, seemed to him to contain a proposition which was so self-evident, that it only seemed to him a wonder that the House of Commons, in the discharge of its first duty, should have paid no attention to the fact that one-eighth of the various revenues of the country were expended without any previous Parliamentary sanction or control. If anything appeared to be the primary duty of a representative of the people, it was surely to see that the money paid by the people reached the Treasury. But the fact was, that a sum of eight millions sterling was disbursed every year without the sanction or authority of Parliament. Since the passing of the Reform Bill a sum of from 110,000,000*l.* to 120,000,000*l.* sterling had been disbursed, without the consent of the House of Commons. He had moved from time to time for the production of various returns, showing what had been the amount of the disbursements of the various boards of expenditure. And he found that in 1837 the different departments had expended, without accounting for it, a sum of 6,155,000*l.* In 1843 they had expended, in a similar manner, a sum of 9,507,000*l.* In 1846 they had expended a sum of 6,152,000*l.* And in the last return ending the 5th of June, 1847, they had expended 5,904,000*l.* It appeared that some of the departments of the Treasury, including the Army, Navy, and Ordnance departments, had received, independently of Parliamentary grants, the following sums:—In 1837, the sum of 767,000*l.*; in 1843, the sum of 1,999,000*l.*; in 1846, the sum of 909,000*l*; and in 1847, the sum of 1,099,747*l.* What he had to complain of was this—and he considered that it was a disgrace to a commercial kingdom like England—that there was no department whatever, where by the means of books it might be shown at a glance what was the whole amount of the public expenditure, and what the amount of receipts. There was nothing called the great ledger, and there was no power of checking the expenditure, or of preventing a wanton extravagance. He was fully aware that the great claims which Ireland had upon the attention of the Government distracted them from a due consideration of this subject; but he did trust that some document or some department would be established, through the medium of which they could be able to arrive at a precise knowledge of the amount of their receipts and expenditure. The principle for which he contended was not a new one: it had been recognised again and again. The Committee which sat in 1831 did recommend, in the very strongest phraseology, that the various revenues of the country should pay the whole amount of their receipts into the Exchequer, and that the various departments engaged in its collection should have their expenses defrayed by annual votes and estimates. There was no reason why Parliament should not have a knowledge of the expenditure incurred; yet, out of that enormous expenditure of 7,000,000*l.* to which he had adverted, Parliament had no previous knowledge of the disbursement of a shilling. One might have supposed that the Audit-office would be the proper department for effecting the control of which he in common with so many others were desirous. But no such thing. It was an unfortunate fact that the Audit-office was wholly incompetent to perform that duty. He could refer to two or three cases in order to prove his assertion. The Audit-office had been obliged to assent to the approval of sums to the amount of some five or six millions, from an utter incapacity to examine the vouchers. Repeated resolutions had been come to by Parliament requiring that every public accountant shall return his accounts. But such accounts had not been given in. The Shannon navigation department had not returned its accounts for the last ten years; the Board of Works had not returned theirs either for several years; and many other departments were very much in fault. It would be well if the House and the country were in possession of a few facts. The Customs detained a sum of nearly 2,000,000*l.* in the progress of their receipts to the Exchequer. He wanted to know why it was that the amount of salaries and pensions paid in this department was not more fully stated, and made the subject of an annual vote. The Excise retained 550,000*l.* in the progress of its receipts to the Exchequer. The charge for collection was 940,000*l.*; for other payments, 94,000*l.*; and for the superannuation fund, 7,400*l.* Nothing could be stronger than the recommendations contained in the reports of the Committee appointed to inquire into the Excise. The Committee produced a series of very able and valuable reports, and they recommended in the strongest possible terms that the gross excess of the revenue collected in the Excise should be paid into the Exchequer. The Crown lands deduct in its progress to the Exchequer no less a sum than 325,000*l.* making deductions by the different revenue departments to the amount of nearly 6,000,000*l.* In other branches of the public service, the same state of things prevailed. Large sums were paid to the officers of the Houses of Parliament; and in the law courts the amount of fees was very considerable. Over these sums Parliament had no control whatever; but he hoped to see arrangements made by which all fees should be paid into the Exchequer. The receivers of these fees paid the amount to their private bankers, and when the disbursements on account of salaries and other heads were made, the balance was paid into the Exchequer. There were fee funds in most of the public departments—the Treasury, the Privy Council, the India Board, the Admiralty and Naval Departments. Out of this state of things great irregularities arose. He believed that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had lately introduced arrangements by which the money received by the Naval and other departments for old stores was to be paid into the Exchequer—an improvement for which he felt grateful. He believed the wisest system to be pursued, if it were determined to maintain a rigid economy, was for Parliament to take possession of the whole bulk of the public revenue. If the public revenues were expended without previous Parliamentary authority, there could be no security for just economy, nor for a proper system of accounts. It might be said that it would be exceedingly inconvenient that Parliament shoul be called to vote the expenses of the public establishments, and that it would open the door to much Parliamentary jobbing, but he considered that publicity was the best security against jobbing. He knew no other country in Europe in which the gross amount of the public revenues was not paid into the Exchequer. The hon. Member concluded by proposing his resolutions.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER had no great hope, more than his hon. Friend, of making this subject entertaining to the House. He quite agreed that the House was the guardian of the public purse, and that there was a considerable amount of the revenue which was not made the subject of a Parliamentary vote. It was, however, a mistake to suppose that this money was withdrawn from the cognisance of Parliament, since the public accounts were made out in such a way as to afford the means of investigation to any hon. Member who thought the inquiry called for. The late Earl Spencer, who had paid the greatest possible attention to the subject of finance, was of opinion that it would be quite impossible to carry out the recommendations of the Commissioners, to which the hon. and learned Gentleman referred. He did not think that the plan which his hon. Friend advocated, if adopted, would produce any greater security to the revenue, or would make the slightest difference in the receipts or expenses to the public. It was evident that departments such as the Customs and Excise must have the means at their command to make the payments they were called upon to make from day to day. With respect to payments other than charges of collection, it was well known to his hon. Friend that many of them were made under Acts of Parliament. With respect to the Scottish revenue, it was one of the articles of the Union with Scotland that the expense of the Scottish establishments should be deducted from the revenue before payment was made into the Exchequer; but of course it would make no practical difference in whatever way the charge of those establishments was defrayed. With regard to the Shannon navigation accounts, he regretted to say that they were, and had been for a considerable period, in a very unsatisfactory state. He trusted, however, that these matters would be improved. He might observe that many improvements had recently been made in the mode of conducting the business of the Board of Trade, and of other departments of the Government. It was not his intention to meet the Motion of the hon. Gentleman by moving the previous question; but he trusted the hon. Gentleman would be satisfied with the explanations that had been given, and that the object he had in view having been so far attained, he would withdraw his Motion.

COLONEL SIBTHORP asked the hon. Member whether he would support him in a Motion for doing away with that absurd and gross job, a sinecure of 2,000*l.* which was paid to the Comptroller of the Exchequer? If he did so, then he would believe him to be sincere in his opposition to the extravagant expenditure on the part of the Government. He must say he did not think that the hon. Member came into court with as pure hands as he ought to have done; for there was a report very generally current, that his son had recently received an appointment of 400*l.* a year. [DR. BOWRING was understood to dissent.] Then he supposed he had been misinformed; but, at all events, he would have been much better pleased to have seen the hon. Member engaging in a tilt against the sinecure system, instead of submitting such a Motion as the present in the year 1848.

MR. HUME objected to the present mode of keeping the public accounts, as they only deceived the country. For instance, a sum of 7,000,000*l.* was kept out of those accounts, in consequence of which the expenditure appeared to be only 51,000,000*l.* when in fact it was 58,000,000*l.* The Government had admitted that the system was wrong, but still they had not put the accounts in proper order. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that it would occasion a great deal of trouble to do so. He (Mr. Hume) never knew a house that had its accounts in bad order, that did not have a great deal of trouble to put them right. But what was the Chancellor of the Exchequer there for? He neglected his duty if he did not see that the accounts were kept as they should be, and thought the public had a right to expect that the Government should attend to this without further delay. The right hon. Gentleman had shown very insufficient reasons, he thought, for not adopting the resolutions; and he would counsel his hon. Friend (Dr. Bowring) to press them to a vote—let them be negatived if the House so pleased—in order that they might be placed on record as a witness against the Government for neglecting to do what they had admitted to be a right and proper thing to be done.

SIR G. CLERK said, it might be imagined from the speech of the hon. Member for Montrose that no regular account was presented to Parliament, showing the total gross revenue, and the total gross expenditure; but the fact was, that a full statement on this subject was placed in the hands of hon. Members every year—in the month of March he believed—drawn up in such a manner as would satisfy any mercantile man. He would not say that the system at present pursued with reference to the public accounts was not susceptible of further amendment; but he certainly considered that it was not open to the objections which had been made by the hon. Member for Montrose. With regard to the question as to the payment of fees, he thought it extremely desirable that endeavours should be made to abolish the system of paying fees to public officers. He believed that that system had, to a great extent, been abandoned; but still there were some public officers whose emoluments were in a great measure dependent on fees that ought to be altered, and the salaries paid by fixed sums.

Mr. V. SMITH hoped the hon. Member would not press the Motion to a division. The subject was one of great importance, and well deserved the consideration of the House; but it was too much to expect that the nine resolutions involved in the Motion of the hon. Member would be all affirmed by the House, particularly as many hon. Members were not acquainted with the subject. To press the question to a division, would therefore defeat rather than promote the object which the hon. Member for Bolton had in view. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was desirous that all fees should be paid into the Exchequer. He therefore hoped the hon. Member for Bolton would not force those who were willing to adopt a great part of his plans to vote against the resolutions on the present occasion.

Dr. BOWRING did not wish to embarrass the House by dividing on all the resolutions; he should content himself with taking its opinion on the first.

The House divided:—Ayes 55; Noes 54: Majority 1.

List of the Ayes.

Aglionby, H. A.
Anderson, A.
Baldock, E. H.
Barrington, Visct.
Bennet, P.
Blake, M. J.
Brotherton, J.
Bunbury, W. M.
Christy, S.
Cobden, R.
Drummond, H.
Duncuft, J.
Forbes, W.
Fox, W. J.
Galway, Visct.
Glyn, G. C.
Greene, J.
Grogan, E.
Hall, Sir B.
Henley, J. W.
Henry, A.
Hill, Lord E.
Hodgson, W. N.
Hood, Sir A.
Hudson, G.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Kershaw, J.
Locke, J.
Mackenzie, W. F.
M'Gregor, J.
Masterman, J.
Miles, W.
Moffatt, G.
Moore, G. H.
O'Brien, Sir L.
O'Connell, M. J.
O'Connor, F.
O'Flaherty, A.
Packe, C. W.
Pigott, F.
Pilkington, J.
Plowden, W. H. C.
Rendlesham, Lord
Salwey, Col.
Sibthorp, Col.
Smith, J. B.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Sullivan, M.
Thompson, Col.
Thornely, T.
Trelawny, J. S.
Walsh, Sir J. B.
Wawn, J. T.
Williams, J.
Willoughby, Sir H.

TELLERS.

Bowring, Dr.
Hume, J.

List of the Noes.

Baines, M. T.
Bellew, R. M.
Boldero, H. G.
Chaplin, W. J.
Clements, hon. C. S.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.
Clive, H. B.
Conolly, Col.
Cubitt, W.
Dalrymple, Capt.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Drummond, H. H.
Fordyce, A. D.
Frewen, C. H.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Grey, R. W.
Hallyburton, Ld J. F. G.
Hawes, B.
Hayter, W. G.
Heneage, G. H. W.
Heywood, J.
Hobhouse, rt. hon. Sir J.
Hobhouse, T. B.
Howard, P. H.
Jervis, Sir J.
Lewis, G. C.
Lockhart, W.
Maitland, T.
Matheson, Col.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Morpeth, Visct.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Ogle, S. C. H.
Paget, Lord G.
Pigot, Sir R.
Pinney, W.
Pugh, D.
Repton, G. W. J.
Ricardo, O.
Rice, E. R.
Russell, Lord J.
Rutherfurd, A.
Seymer, H. K.
Shelburne, Earl of
Smith, M. T.
Somerville, rt. hon. Sir W.
Strickland, Sir G.
Talbot, C. R. M.
Talfourd, Serj.
Townley, R. G.
Vivian, J. E.
Westhead, J. P.
Wilson, J.
Wood, rt. hon. Sir C.

TELLERS.

Hill, Lord M.
Parker, J.

The House divided on the original question:—Ayes 56; Noes 51: Majority 5.

House adjourned at half-past One.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, May 31, 1848.

Minutes.] Petitions Presented. By Mr. Goulburn, from the Town of Aylsham (Norfolk), and by other Hon. Members, from several Places, for Better Observance of the Lord's Day.—By Mr. Matheson, from the Presbytery of Tain, against the Marriage (Scotland) Bill (1847).—By Viscount Drumlanrig, from Kirkmichael, Dumfries-shire, and several other Places, in favour of the Places of Worship Sites (Scotland) Bill.—By Mr. Sullivan, from the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of Kilkenny, for Removal of the Disabilities from the Roman Catholic Clergy (Ireland).—By Lord Hotham, from Freeholders of the East Riding of Yorkshire, against the Roman Catholic Relief Bill.—By Mr. Duncan M'Neill, from the Presbytery of Lorne (Argyle), against the Diplomatic Relations, Court of Rome, Bill.—By Mr. Sharman Crawford, from Todmorden (Lancaster), in favour of a Secular Education.—By Mr. Bateson, from Merchants and Others, of Coleraine, for Alteration of the Imprisonment for Debt (Ireland) Bill.—By Sir H. F. Davie, from the Royal Burgh of Haddington, against the Lunatic Asylums (Scotland) Bill.—By Mr. Meagher, from Members of the Waterford Sanitary Association, for Extending the Registration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages Act to Ireland.—By Mr. Matheson, from the Parochial Board of Tarbat, Ross-shire, against the Proposed Alteration of the Law respecting the Registration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages (Scotland).

ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIEF BILL.

Order of the day for going into Committee on the Roman Catholic Relief Bill having been read,

Mr. LAW moved—

"That it be an Instruction to the Committee to divide the Bill into two Bills, including in one of the said Bills all that relates to the Act 10th George IV., c. 7, and the provisions thereof."

His object in moving this was not to show any favour to the first portion of the Bill, but to rescue the provisions of the 10th

George IV. from the operation of the Bill before the House.

Mr. ANSTEY did not wish to occupy the House by entering into any premature discussion on those clauses which related to the Act of the 10th George IV. He hoped, therefore, that the House would not anticipate the discussion that would take place when they came to that stage of the Bill when the clauses referred to would come under consideration. He hoped the hon. and learned Gentleman who had moved the Amendment would not force the House into a discussion of a question which did not properly arise at the present moment. If, however, the hon. and learned Gentleman thought fit to divide the House on the Amendment, he (Mr. Anstey) should then give such an explanation of the 10th George IV. as would satisfy the House of the impolicy of the instruction. He now wished to know from the hon. and learned Gentleman whether he intended to divide the House on his Amendment? [Mr. Law said that he was entirely in earnest, and intended to persevere.] He would then state to the House what was the effect of the hon. and learned Gentleman's Motion. He (Mr. Anstey) had never attempted to conceal from the House that by far the most important portion of this Bill was that which related to the penal clauses contained in the Act of 1829, commonly called the Roman Catholic Relief Act. His object was to repeal those penal statutes which were passed against a deserving class of religionists on account of their profession and practice of a particular form of religion. If, however, the House should think that the measure was too large, he was content to take such an instalment of the boon he sought, as the House in its wisdom might concede. He should, however, feel it his duty to revive, at some future period, a discussion on those clauses—he should press the consideration of them on the House and on the country, in every possible way, until this act of justice was done to the Roman Catholics. But he would not anticipate, at the hands of the House, such a slight upon the immense majority of the people of Ireland, whose loyalty Parliament were anxious to retain, as would be involved in the adoption of the Amendment. The result of it would be to leave one-third of the clergy and ministers of 8,000,000 or 9,000,000 of people in the United Kingdom still outlawed, and without any legal *status*. If the Bill was passed without the alteration proposed by the hon. and learned Gentleman, it would only have the effect of placing perhaps one-third of the ministers of 8,500,000 or 9,000,000 of Roman Catholics, including those in England, upon the same legal *status* with the ministers of that small denomination of believers who are not Christians, and to whose laity the Legislature the other day refused admission to Parliament. One-third of the clergy of this large Christian population were at this moment outlawed, and had no legal position in the country, while those who recognised their mission were eligible, with one or two exceptions, to the highest offices of the State. Those men were put out of the pale of the constitution, and, furthermore, made liable to certain ignominious pains and penalties. This Bill merely went to place them upon a level with the Rabbis of the Jews; and it was for the House to decide whether the priests of that Christian Church, from which the Church of England boasted that she had derived the apostolical succession, were less worthy to breathe the air of England than the teachers of a religion that held our Saviour to be an impostor and a felon. Ample security would be given to the State against—he would not say the probability—for no one who had studied the subject believed in any such likelihood—but against the possibility of the liberty proposed to be granted being abused at any future time by members of those secret societies which, according to some of the petitioners who had addressed the House, now existed in the Church of Rome, but of whose existence in that Church he was quite sure no Roman Catholic ever heard until the fact was stated in these petitions. The reverend persons in question would have to be registered in such a way as should give the State the fullest information with respect to their abode, their occupation, their spiritual superiors, and the objects and purposes of the society or order with which by their vow they were more immediately connected. The promoters of the Bill offered the House that every one of those persons whom this Bill proposed to restore to the country shall be duly registered, and every information given respecting their superiors and the rules of their order. It was also proposed that every Roman Catholic joining any of those religious orders should be registered within six months after joining "such order, community, or society." It was also provided that any such person coming into this country after the passing of the Act must register within six months after his arrival. The form of those clauses had been taken, with such alterations as the case required, from that part of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill of 1829 which provided for the registration of such religious orders as then existed among the Roman Catholics. But the difference between the clauses in question and those on which they were framed, was very substantial. To explain this, it would be necessary for him to inform the House what the actual legislation on this subject really was. This was the more necessary, because notwithstanding the several explanations he had already given, many hon. Members on that (the Opposition) side of the House seemed to have entirely mistaken the law concerning monks and Jesuits. The noble Lord the Member for Leicestershire (the Marquess of Granby), the hon. Member for Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate), and other hon. Members, seemed to think that there was no absolute prohibition of Jesuits and monks in this country, and that such of them as chose to comply with the prescribed conditions of relief could always obtain relief under the Roman Catholic Emancipation Act. He could assure hon. Members that this was a very great misconception; and he would beg their attention for a few moments whilst he endeavoured to satisfy them that it was so. At no period, prior to 1829, was any distinction made between the Jesuits and other members of the Roman Catholic Church. In the Roman Catholic Relief Bill of that year, a distinction was first made. The penal laws struck at all alike. The priest, whether he were regular or secular, was equally under their lash; and when the Royal prerogative was exerted to mitigate their severity, the boon was conferred indifferently on either. The House would remember that an important fact in connexion with this was mentioned in one of the earlier debates on this Bill. Lord J. Manners, whose absence from the House all must sincerely regret, had drawn attention to the famous controversy held in the presence of King James the First, between Laud and Fisher—a controversy in which all that learning and ability could supply was urged on either side in support of the respective Churches. Now, Fisher was an avowed Jesuit; and in the authorised account of the controversy printed by the Royal command, the title-page describes the Roman Catholic disputant as "Mr. Fisher, a Jesuit." So, too, with the earlier Relief Acts. None of those Acts made any distinction amongst the tolerated ministers of the Roman Catholic religion. The Act of 1829 was the first which did so. It contained a preamble which, after alleging the fact of there being within the realm Jesuits, monks, and so forth, recited that it was expedient "to make provision for their gradual suppression and final prohibition." Let the House attend to this remarkable declaration, and compare it with the enacting clauses which followed. By these, all male religious then existing and being then within the realm, or who, being natural-born subjects, should afterwards come within the realm, were required to register themselves within a period of six months; and very nearly in the form which he (Mr. Anstey) proposed for all male religious; and upon such registration being made, they were empowered to remain within the realm for life, and freely exercise their ministry. By another clause, the Secretary of State was empowered (if a Protestant) to license foreign monks and Jesuits to come into and reside for six months in the realm. It appeared, however, that no such licenses were ever asked for. This was the extent of the concession made by the Act of 1829. On the other hand, it was by the same Act distinctly provided, that if any other Jesuit or member of religious order came into the realm, or if any person should, after the commencement of the Act, profess himself a Jesuit or member of any religious order, he should suffer the penalty of banishment for life, to be executed, if need were, by deportation; and if he should return to, or be at large within the realm after such sentence, he should incur the pains of felony, and suffer transportation for life. No judge called upon to execute that law had any power reserved to him by it of mitigating its severity. The Queen alone could do that; but after sentence, and upon the advice of the Minister. That is to say, the large and respectable body of English and Irish ecclesiastics whose rights he was defending, were, by an Act not obsolete, but passed the other day, and in which many now hearing him had taken their part, put beyond the pale of the constitution, and placed, for the mere liberty of existence, at the arbitrary discretion of the Minister. He did not think that such a state of things was either just or prudent. He did not think that any man born in England, be he cleric or laic, should be dependent for the privileges of a British subject upon the mere caprice of the Secretary of State. And yet such was the state of the law at this moment, that some of the most worthy men in England, for whom this measure was intended, were liable to transportation for life for daring to exercise those privileges; and it was at any moment in the power of the Secretary of State to enforce that liability. Was such a state of things to be tolerated any longer? He proposed, by this measure, to repeal the present absurd and inhuman law. He proposed, in the first place, that the measure for its repeal should be framed in such a manner as would give satisfaction, if possible, even to its opponents. He proposed to give such a security as did not exist at present with respect to the objects of this measure. On the other hand, all that he demanded was freedom of conscience for the excellent gentlemen who were its objects. He could assure the House that the number of those who could take advantage of the relief clauses in the Act of 1829 was now, by lapse of years, become exceedingly small—the number of those in terms excluded from the benefit of that Act, very great. That Act had for its objects "the gradual suppression and final prohibition" of Jesuits and members of other religious orders; and the House would see that, in nineteen years, "gradual suppression" must have advanced very far towards "final prohibition." Let them not suppose, however, that either the one object or the other could be accomplished. The conscience of man was superior to penal enactments. They had professed to take the Roman Catholic conscience under the protection of the law. One of the first duties of the Christian was to ascertain and follow his true vocation. If the statute law interposed between him and the performance of that duty, where was the Christian—where the citizen—who would deny that it was still his duty *non obstante statuto*, to persevere, to follow the dictates of his conscience, and to brave the penalties imposed by their Act of Parliament? But it was for the House to say whether it was politic, whether it was just, to keep alive this dangerous and unseemly conflict between fact and law—fact that could not be set aside—law that could not be enforced? It was for them to consider whether their endeavour to retain in loyalty and allegiance the Irish people was not likely to be defeated by their own example? On the one hand they maintained in force laws imposing cruel and odious punishments on a large and, perhaps, the most beloved portion of their clergy, for no other reason than that they had embraced a mode of life which in a peculiar manner entitled them to Roman Catholic reverence, and which the Sovereign Pontiff delighted to honour. On the other hand, they were also told, that with the same tenacity with which Parliament retained those laws, it was also determined to resist their being put into execution. Was this the example of loyalty, obedience, and respect for law, which at this juncture especially it behoved them to set to distracted, to Roman Catholic Ireland? Either these penalties were necessary securities to the State, or they were not. If they were not, why retain them? If they were, how could the Government hesitate to put them in force? Why was Mr. Mitchel transported for the security of the State? And why was Dr. St. Leger of Clongowes Wood—equally dangerous with the *United Irishman*, if the advocates of these penalties are to be believed — to escape? If the Government did not intend to enforce the law against these gentlemen—if they refused to prosecute Jesuits and monks who had not registered themselves according to Act of Parliament, then he asked what right they had to prosecute Mr. Mitchel? It was not that they had no evidence that they declined prosecuting the Jesuits and monks. It was only last year that an honourable Member of this House, Mr. Bickham Escott, whose absence from the present Parliament he had also to deplore—presented a petition to this House from the prior, monks, and lay brothers of the Cistertian Abbey of St. Bernard, near Loughborough (one of the order of Latrappe), in which those reverend persons not only described themselves to be male religious, but further stated that they were such in violation of the statute. Their petition was printed by order of this House; and in itself it affords the very best evidence that can be required for the conviction of the petitioners, if, indeed, their conviction be expedient for the security of the State. But, if not, on what ground can we refuse to comply with the prayer of the petition; and by the repeal of the Act which outlaws, restore those excellent religious to their native country? If they thought that the present law afforded them indispensable securities for the safety of the kingdom, let them retain the law. But if they retained that law, they were surely bound to enforce it. He had shown the House that there was a violation—a contemptuous violation—of that law on the part of these gentlemen, for they had, in a petition to that House, stated that they had acted in opposition to the law, and that they sought for the adoption of this Bill to screen them from the consequences of that violation. If the Legislature refused to grant that petition, then they could not stop short of enforcing the law against them. If, on the other hand, the House thought that the existing law was unwise and unchristian, and that it was absurd and impolitic to enforce it, then *à fortiori* it must be bad to retain it. He proposed, therefore, to repeal that law under certain conditions. If he followed his own bent, he certainly should be better satisfied to propose its repeal unaccompanied by any conditions; but if they must have conditions, they at least should not be able to say that he had not done his best to lay before them the only conditions which, as it occurred to him, would be satisfactory to the House, and such as the Legislature ought to demand, or Catholics ought to grant. Nevertheless, if the opponents of the measure knew of any better conditions—anything *rectius istis*, he (Mr. Anstey) would say, *candidus imperti* —let them be proposed, and he would give them the fairest consideration. He should always be found willing to support any measure which tended towards the mitigation of the existing law. If they decided upon rejecting this Bill, the question could not rest there; an agitation would begin to-morrow out of doors—an agitation influenced, it might be, by men whose ulterior objects were dangerous to the State. Let the Legislature, then, not consent to the absurd and unwise delay proposed by the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Law). Let the hon. Secretary give them the benefit of his own testimony in this matter, as his immediate predecessor had done. He (Mr. Anstey) was not then a Member of the House; but he had had two years ago the honour of witnessing from the gallery one of the debates on this very Bill, and he was sure that it must have been with a delight not inferior to his own that hon. Members heard on that occasion the testimony of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Ripon (Sir James Graham) to the good desert of the Jesuits. That right hon. Baronet, then Secretary of State for the Home Department, declared on his official responsibility, and with all the sanction derived from his long experience of public affairs, that, as Home Secretary, he had for some time previously devoted his best consideration to this subject, as far as regarded the Jesuits, and he declared that there was no difference between them and the secular priests; and that there appeared to him no reason why these laws against them should be continued any longer; and that the only thing that prevented him at that moment from undertaking a measure for their repeal was the difficulty of consulting the prejudices, but still the honest prejudices, entertained by some members of the Church of England with respect to these religious orders, and particularly with respect to the Jesuits. He (Mr. Anstey) was sure nothing had ever fallen from the present right hon. Gentleman who filled the office of Secretary of State, which was in the slightest degree inconsistent with that declaration. Thus they had the testimony, and he appealed to it, of the present Home Secretary, and of his predecessor, that there was no ground why any reasonable man should set himself in opposition to the present measure. As English subjects, the gentlemen for whose relief this measure was introduced, were of course entitled to all the privileges of a subject of these realms; but, in addition, let the House consider for a moment how they had confirmed their right to the enjoyment of those privileges by the immense aids which they had given to the increase of religion, morality, and science in Great Britain. He was sorry that he had not in his possession a full return of the labours of these religious orders in Great Britain and Ireland; but he would claim the indulgence of the House whilst he laid before it such particulars as his industry had enabled him to collect. In the first place—

Sir G. GREY, after apologising for interrupting the hon. and learned Member, begged to suggest that he might defeat his own object by entering into a long discussion at that time, and he advised the hon. Member to defer any further observations which he might have to make until the House had divided on the Amendment before it. He was afraid that if the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Anstey) continued to discuss the merits of the Bill at present, he would be followed by other hon. Members, so that, in fact, no real progress would be made in the Bill that day. He (Sir G. Grey) could assure the hon. and learned Gentleman that he made this suggestion with every friendly feeling to himself as well as to his measure. He trusted that all future observations on the merits of the Bill would be postponed to the time when the House went into Committee upon the Bill, when the several clauses could be fully discussed.

Mr. LAW: I hope the hon. Member will not labour under the false impression that this measure will not be further discussed on the present question.

Mr. ANSTEY said, he had understood it to be the wish of the House that the discussion should be taken then. He was very much obliged for the recommendation of the right hon. Baronet; but at the same time he felt bound, after what had fallen from the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Law) to say, that he could not now close his observations on the question until he had enabled the House to form some conception of the manner in which these religious orders had entitled themselves, not to persecution, but to complete toleration, if not protection, on the part of that House; at the same time he would promise the House not to repeat the observations which he was about to make when the Bill reached Committee. By such an understanding the right hon. Baronet must see that no time would be unnecessarily expended on the discussion of this Bill. In order to give the House some notion of the magnitude of the interest with which it was called upon to deal by this Bill, he would state to it as briefly as he could some of the statistics relative to the number, &c., of these religious orders in Great Britain and Ireland. In the first place (to begin with Ireland), he found that in the archdiocese of Dublin, at the beginning of this year, the number of the regular clergy amounted to 83; in Kildare and Leitrim the number was 10; in Ossory, 15; in Thurles, 15; in Cork, 22; and in several other dioceses the number was about the same. In Waterford and Limerick there were 14 regulars, and different convents, besides one abbey, which contained 100 members, of whom 14 were clergymen. That abbey, he need not remind the House, was the celebrated Abbey of Mount Melleray, one of the few institutions in Ireland, of that nature, which had done its best (and with great success) to supply that part of Ireland with the benefits of a paternal government and a resident proprietary. The members of that abbey had brought into cultivation 300 acres of land formerly supposed to be irreclaimable; they had cultivated 230 acres more; and, with respect to their services to science and religion, they had established two schools, in which no less than 300 children were fed, clothed, and taught. From a number of other dioceses there were no returns; but the gross result of these returns was this—there were 2,205 secular priests in Ireland, and about 300 regulars, together with about 200 more who had not yet received the order of priesthood, and who were at present occupied in the education of youth. There were 62 convents and 34 monasteries in Ireland. In England there were these—in Yorkshire, one Benedictine monastery; in Lancashire, one Jesuit college, of whom there were 18 Jesuits in the house, and about 18 on missions. In the western district there were one Benedictine abbey, and two Conceptionists; in the Benedictine abbey there were six members in the house, and there were others on missions, for whom he had no return. Then in the central district there were one Conceptionist convent, one Redemptionist, one Cistercian, one Dominican, one Jesuit, and two others; making seven convents or colleges of religious orders in the central district. He had no returns from Scotland. With respect to the schools of the orders, he should merely trouble the House by mentioning those that were taught by the Christian Brothers; and he would again take Ireland first. He found that in Ireland, according to the list which he had made out, there were no less than 59 schools conducted by these deserving men, in which were taught 7,760 children. He found that in England they had established 34 schools, where 4,400 children were taught, making a total of 93 schools in England and Ireland, where 12,160 children were receiving the benefits of education. In addition he found that by these religious orders there were conducted several Sunday schools, where 1,600 adults received instruction. From this list he had been obliged to exclude Birmingham, not having accurate returns respecting that town. Besides this, there were 4,400 children receiving education from the hands of several other religious orders, whose names at present he did not know. With respect to their almsdeeds of every kind, he would only mention one fact. He had received the paper which he then held in his hand from the Prior of the Cistercian abbey or monastery at Loughborough, who, he must say, gave it him with great reluctance, for the House must feel how repugnant to the feelings of a man of piety it must be to trumpet forth the good works of even his institute. He found, then, that from the beginning of January, 1847, until the end of November last (a period of eleven months), no less than 34,093 people had been fed in that one abbey, 11,545 houseless had been lodged. It might be gratifying to the House to know (in answer to those who had exclaimed against almsdeeds as having a tendency to create and perpetuate a race of paupers) what were the number of persons relieved during the different months of that period. He found that as many as 1,672 were lodged in one month, whilst in the following month the number amounted to no more than 414. That was a fact as honourable, in his opinion, to those who received as to those who administered the relief. It showed that when the deep distress which had overwhelmed that district, in common with the other parts of England, had partially passed away, the number of applicants became immediately less in the like proportion. Now, these were the good deeds of those possible convicts, whose interests he stood there that day to advocate. These good works spoke for themselves, and seemed to say on behalf of the religious orders, "Many good things have we done in our day; for which of them will you now transport us?" The hon. and learned Gentleman concluded by regretting that the advocacy of this important question had not fallen into abler hands. He relied with confidence, however, not upon his weak and imperfect statement of the case of those whose interests he represented, but upon those sentiments of justice, of mercy, and fair dealing which were implanted deep in the bosoms of Englishmen, to which he was sure no appeal could ever be made in vain.

Mr. NEWDEGATE admitted that in the arguments which the hon. and learned Gentleman had advanced, there was nothing which was discreditable to him, entertaining the religious opinions he did; but he thought that the House ought to know fairly by whom it was that this question was urged, and under what authority it was proposed. The House ought not to be deceived by seeing a question of this kind in the hands of a private Member; but they ought to know the authority with which that hon. Member brought it under their notice. Now, it happened that, on turning over the pages of the *Roman Catholic Directory* of 1848, he found the following statement:—

> "19th of February, 1848.—Thomas Chisholm Anstey, Esq., Barrister-at-law, made a Knight of the Order of St. Gregory, by His Holiness the Pope, as a mark of his approbation, and as a reward for his great services in the cause of the Roman Catholic Church, especially for his endeavours to obtain a repeal of the statutes imposing penalties upon Roman Catholics."

The hon. Member for Youghal, therefore, was a member of a military order of knighthood conferred by the Roman Pontiff. This combination of a military with an ecclesiastical character, was not uncommon in the Roman Church; witness the Knights Templars, the Knights of St. John, and the Jesuits, which latter were founded by Loyola, himself a soldier, and first general of the order, which still yielded implicit obedience to their generals, the successors of Loyola. If the hon. and learned Gentleman were sincerely convinced that it was for this kingdom's good that the Roman Catholic religion should prevail, he would admit that the hon. and learned Gentleman was justified in taking the course he was now pursuing; but, if experience went for anything, it was powerful to show that all history went against the Jesuits. As countries gained their freedom, the Jesuits lost their power. The first step to liberty in every Roman Catholic nation was the expulsion of the Jesuits. Even from Rome itself they had been expelled. What were the obligations imposed on the hon. and learned Gentleman by being made a Knight of the Order of St. Gregory? And by whom was that order established? It was established by Pope Gregory VII., who deposed the Emperor Henry IV. Now, he (Mr. Newdegate) wished to show the nature of this Order of St. Gregory, so far as it might be gathered from the character of its founder. He found in the *Roman Catholic Directory*, that the festival in honour of St. Gregory was especially ordered by the Pope to be observed in England, and indulgences were granted for the observance of it; and on that festival certain lessons were read so anti-social and subversive of all temporal authority in their character, that their use had been forbidden in most, if not all, the Continental States. The lessons for St. Gregory's festival, and that for the festival of Pius the Vth, who pretended to depose Queen Elizabeth, were suppressed by the Parliament of France in 1829, and again by King Charles the VIth, in 1746, but reappeared in the Paris and Lyons edition of the *Breviary*, published in 1842, page 662; in the Ratisbon edition of 1840; and in the English and Irish edition of 1846: all these years were not long antecedent to the troubles on the Continent, and the fall of the dynasty of France. These festivals were in honour of Popes who had practised the power of deposing sovereigns, and of absolving subjects from allegiance, which their successors still claimed. [Mr. ANSTEY: No, no!] He (Mr. Newdegate) concluded that the hon. Member would not dispute the decrees of the Roman canon law. In Wordsworth's *Letters on the Church of Rome* he found the following quotations from the edition of the canon law printed in 1839, with the approval of the Roman Catholic Consistory of Saxony: "The kingly power is subject to the pontifical; that the Pope has a right to depose sovereigns, to dispose of their kingdoms, and to absolve subjects from their allegiance," &c. From the Pope's assertions concerning his own powers, in his own canon laws, published by his own order, the following extracts were quoted by Mr. Wordsworth :—

ON OATHS OF ALLEGIANCE.

> "The Apostolic authority altogether cancels illicit oaths, as the Lord says by the Prophet. Isa. lviii. 6.
>
> "The Roman Pontiff absolves from the oath of allegiance, when he deposes any from their authority.—Gregory IX., Decret ii. pars. c. xv., q. vi., p. 647."

With respect to the deposition of Sovereigns, and the oaths of subjects and soldiers, it was said, p. 648 :—

> "The pontifical authority absolves from the oath of allegiance."

The following ancient precedent is then cited :—

> "The Roman Pontiff, Zachariah, deposed the King of the Franks, not so much for his evil deeds, as because he was not serviceable to his own power, and raised to the throne in his place Pepin, the father of Charlemagne, and absolved all the Franks from the oath of allegiance which they had taken.
>
> "The same is done frequently *(auctoritate frequenti)* by the Holy Church, when it releases soldiers from the obligation of their oaths."

On the subject of oaths of allegiance to excommunicated persons, he found the following passage, p. 648 :—

> "No one owes allegiance to any excommunicated persons before they are reconciled to the Holy See."

The Pope proceeds to forbid such allegiance to be paid :—

> "No oaths are to be kept if they are against the interests of the Church of Rome.
>
> "Oaths which are against the interest of the Church are not to be called oaths, but perjuries. —Decret. Greg IX., lib. ii., tit. xxiv., cap. 27 (vol. ii. p. 358)."

The following sentences would show that the oaths of allegiance, taken by ecclesiastics to temporal sovereigns, were considered illicit and void :—

> "Ecclesiastics not having temporalities from laics, are not bound to take oaths of allegiance to them. Certain laics contrive to usurp too much on the Divine right, when they compel ecclesiastics, receiving no temporalities from them, to take oaths of allegiance; but since, according to the Apostle (Rom. xiv. 4), every one stands or falls to his own Master, we prohibit such ecclesiastics from any such violence.
>
> "We declare that you are not bound by your oath of allegiance to your Prince, but that you may resist freely even your Prince himself, in defence of the rights and honours of the Church, and even of your own private advantage.
>
> "The kingly power is subject to the pontifical, and is bound to obey it."

Now, the hon. and learned Gentleman had said, that if there was anything required by the law of the land which was against the law of conscience, the law of conscience should prevail. But what was the law of conscience with the hon. and learned Gentleman? It was, that he should act in accordance with the decrees of his Church —with him the sole rule of right and wrong was that which was laid down by his Church. If, therefore, the hon. and learned Gentleman acted in accordance with the commands of the councils and the Popes, he must feel himself bound to resist every statute of this country that maintained the Protestant religion; and in opposition to those statutes he must set up the authority of the Pope. [Mr. ANSTEY: No, no!] The hon. and learned Gentleman said "No;" but these laws were embodied in the 17th canon of the third council of Lateran; it is there affirmed that those oaths are not to be called oaths, but perjuries rather, which are contrary to the advantage of the Church. Bishop Doyle says (Appendix to Irish Education Report, p. 794) :—

> "The Third Lateran Council is one of the General Councils of the Roman Catholic Church."

In the 27th chapter of that Council it is affirmed—

> "That all who are in any way bound to heretics should consider themselves absolved from all fidelity and obedience due to them as long as they persist in their iniquity."

Archbishop Murray admitted that the Council of Constance was general; and Roman Catholics profess that they receive without doubt what the canons of the general councils declare; and one of the decrees of the Council of Constance is:—"That faith is not to be kept with heretics, to the prejudice of the Church." If the principles laid down in the decretals of Gregory were fully adopted by the Roman Catholics, he could not help trembling for their allegiance. When the hon. and learned Gentleman avowed himself as the maintainer of the most extreme doctrines of the Roman Church, it behoved the House to look with extreme caution at any proposition coming from him for the alteration of the laws of this country. To alter them, for what? Did the hon. and learned Gentleman complain of persecution? No such thing. Immediately preceding the convulsions which had shaken Europe, they saw the Pope of Rome, in some cases, insisting on a renewal of those obligations upon Roman Catholics to consider his power supreme over every law and institution of any earthly potentate. Within a few weeks they had seen dynasties, institutions, aye, and the most ancient Powers of the continent of Europe, shaken to their foundations. And what was passing even in that House? Why, the hon. and learned Member for Youghal came and threatened them with agitation if they did not concede the measure he now contended for. The noble Lord the Member for Arundel had said that the Church of Rome was an aggressive church. He never doubted it; and they had evidence of it before them. The hon. and learned Member for Youghal was an illustration of the aggressive nature of that church. That hon. and learned Member was threatening them with agitation if they did not repeal these laws; he did not ask them to repeal the law *in misericordiam,* but he demanded it in a tone most threatening, and almost insulting to the House. But he would tell the hon. and learned Gentleman that Protestants were not to be deterred by threats. The example of the Continent was not lost upon them. The Protestants desired to persecute none, but they would not permit themselves to be dictated to by any. And now he would turn to Her Majesty's Government, and beg their attention for a few moments, while he read to them their own expressed opinion with respect to the religious orders, and particularly the Jesuits; the legalisation of which, and the formal establishment of which, in this country, was the object of the second section of the Bill before the House. He had occasion some time since to question the manner in which the correspondence with the Court of Rome had been carried on by the Government, and to declare that, in his opinion, the noble Lord at the head of Foreign Affairs had acted disgenuously towards the House; but he hoped that nothing had occurred to induce the noble Lord to suppose that he disapproved of the course which had been adopted by Her Majesty's Government with respect to the removal of the Jesuits from Switzerland. He found in the correspondence relating to the affairs of Switzerland a letter from Lord Palmerston to the Marquess of Normanby, dated November 16, 1847. In that despatch the noble Lord says—

"The British Government will most cheerfully join with the other Four Powers in making a friendly and conciliatory offer; and will be truly rejoiced if Great Britain should thus, in conjunction with its allies, be instrumental in rescuing the Swiss nation from the calamities of internal conflict. * * * * * * *

"Now, the purpose in view being to settle a difference, the first step to be taken seems to be to ascertain, as far as possible, what are the matters in dispute; and it appears to Her Majesty's Government that the points which at present are practically at issue between the Diet and the Sonderbond, and which seem to be the immediate causes of the civil war, are, on the one hand, the establishment of the Jesuits in Switzerland, and the separate union of the seven cantons in the Sonderbond; and, on the other hand, proceedings either threatened or begun by the Diet towards the seven cantons, which, in the opinion of those cantons, infringe upon that principle of separate cantonal sovereignty which forms the basis of the federal compact. Now, it appears to Her Majesty's Government that the objection which the Diet makes to the continuance of the Jesuits in Switzerland is not destitute of good and reasonable foundation. The society of Jesuits must be looked at both in a religious and in a political point of view.

"In its religious character it is a society avowedly established to make war upon the Protestant religion. What wonder, then, that in a small country like Switzerland, where two-thirds of the people are Protestants, the introduction of such a society should give rise to dissension between Catholic and Protestant, and should be viewed with aversion by the majority of the nation?

"In its ecclesiastical character the society of Jesuits is known to be exclusive and encroaching. Can it be surprising then, that in Switzerland, as in other countries, a great portion even of the Catholic population should look upon the Jesuits with jealousy and dislike?

"In their political character the society of Jesuits have always been known to lean to arbitrary power, and to be averse to popular rights. Can it then excite astonishment that this tendency, which has made the Jesuits an object of special legislative prohibition in France, and which is well known not to have been without its share in producing those events which led to the French Revolution of July, 1830, should be considered by the republics of Switzerland as dangerous to the fundamental principles of their political constitutions? Without examining, then, whether some of the persons who have now arrayed the majority of the Swiss nation in arms against the Jesuits, have or have not ulterior objects in view, Her Majesty's Government cannot but acknowledge that the grievance of which the Swiss majority at present complain is a real one; and that as long as that grievance continues to exist, there is no hope of internal peace in Switzerland; and it seems consequently to follow, that the Five Powers, who are anxious to restore tranquillity to that country, ought to begin by endeavouring to remove this fertile source of evil.

"Her Majesty's Government, therefore, would suggest that the basis of the arrangement to be proposed by the Five Powers to the contending parties in Switzerland should be the removal of the Jesuits."

He (Mr. Newdegate) begged the attention of the House to the similarity of circumstances in this country and Switzerland; both had free institutions, both a population two-thirds Protestant to one-third Roman Catholic. He did not ask the Government to expel the Jesuits from this country. He did ask them, however, not further to legalise an order of men who had ever misused their power, and proved themselves the enemies of toleration and freedom. In a newspaper which was patronised by the authorities of Stonyhurst, a letter had appeared containing the following extracts. He was aware that it had been denied that the Jesuits were in any way connected with the newspaper in question (the *Tablet*); but it was a newspaper which was acceptable to a great number of Roman Catholics. It appeared that the Papal power lent itself through its agents to the revolutionary and democratic movements of the day for the acquisition of power. The following extracts from the letter in question would show the spirit which animated the Roman Catholic clergy of the present day:—

"What could be worse for the fortunes of the Church than, while the mass of society was becoming, or had become, democratic, for the clergy to be thrown in complete dependence on monarchic or aristocratic influences, against which the inmost nature of the people revolted and rebelled?

"In Prussia, what rescued the Church from danger? What but the spirit of democracy? The great archbishop, boldly placing himself in opposition to the Crown and the bureaucracy, and, from his prison, striking the chords of a popular sentiment before which the monarch was forced to yield. The same act both preached religion to the people and raised up the people against the Crown, swelled both the multitudes in the churches and the ranks of the political opposition. And thus the aristocrat, Mgr. Drost. Vischering, archbishop of Cologne, became, without intending it, and from the inevitable pressure of the times, at once an apostle of God and a tribune of the people.

"And so in Bavaria. Most fortunate and providential do we regard it that the Catholic political power was already overthrown before the revolution; so that the revolution is in no respect a conquest over that. The power of the Crown in behalf of the clergy was no more. They had nothing to hope for religion, except from the goodwill of the people. And now, thank God, the revolution comes to place everything in its proper position—to free the Church from the odium of a protection which could avail it nothing, and to compel the clergy to turn their whole attention to the only source from whence in future power can be derived.

"From this year of grace 1848, we suppose that no Catholic can be so blind or so insensible to what is passing around him as to suppose that the mission of the Church is to reconstitute the world through the worn-out crutches of an aristocracy and a monarchy such as once had place upon the earth. If these old institutions are to continue much longer—if the power even of the middle class is to remain permanent—if society itself is to be saved from a continually recurring anarchy, and efforts ever followed by disappointed hope, it must be by monarchy, aristocracy, and middle class becoming imbued with the spirit of the industrial democracy, making themselves its servants. * * * * * * *

"And the same thing is true of the Church. She cannot die. She must live. She must suffer. She must overcome. * * * *

"To do this she must identify herself with the people. She must become their servant. She must stoop down to their lips to learn from them their diseases, that so she may discover and apply the remedy. She must learn their new dialect, in order to teach them once more her old truths. The hearths of her consecrated children must become democratic in order that on that only possible basis to reorganise a crumbling world."

The language of Mr. Lucett, the envoy of the Pope to the Swiss Diet, was also significant of the views of the Roman Catholic Church at the present moment. Addressing the Diet, Mr. Lucett, in the name of the Pope, says—

"The Catholic clergy, and the august Pontiff whom I represent, wish to advance with you in that course of progress which the Church has so often, in past ages, opened to the nations that were enlightened and civilised under its auspices. We are to-day what we were in the first ages of Christianity, the children of the light, as the apostle says. Far from fearing the day, it is error that seeks and cherishes darkness; light is the daughter of truth. We only fear, for the people, those false glimmerings, those deceitful fires that conduct to the abyss.

"Now, on the contrary, the social state of past times is nearly, and, ere long, it will be entirely, destroyed. What will be the result for the Church? The Church, always consistent with itself in that which is essential to her—the Church will accept the social transformation of the age. I will say more—it will not only accept it, but, faithful to its mission to promote progress in the life of nations, it will second and assist that transformation.

"Be assured, then, that the Church, certain of the perpetuity of its destiny, fixes not its hopes exclusively on any human institution. It has long accepted with gratitude the favours of the powers of the earth; it does so still where that temporary support is afforded to it. Nor will it refuse when the moment shall arrive to acknowledge the great principle of a complete separation between it and the State. It will not for a moment hesitate, if circumstances so decide, to inscribe on its banner that noble and supreme expression of tolerance and liberty. It has long since done so in Young America, and will do it again, perhaps to-morrow, on your frontiers, in one or other of those countries where the people so gloriously struggle to conquer their independence, or to reconstitute social order on a new basis. Pardon me for having entered at such length on these preliminary considerations. I felt it necessary to explain fully my real views."

He had felt it to be his duty to call the attention of the House to the language used by the Papal power, and the more especially because the hon. Member for Youghal, the exponent of that power, had threatened them with an agitation in this country if this measure for the legalised establishment of those religious orders which were the most active agents of the Papal power, was rejected. A strong hand, therefore, must be kept on the Orders of the Romish church. The Protestants of England would oppose, denounce, and overturn any Government which should prove false to the Protestant monarchy, so far as to deprive itself of the means of counteracting the intriguing designs of the Jesuits. The history of the order showed that the apprehensions entertained with respect to that order were by no means irrational. It had excited five different conspiracies against James I. before he had reigned a year; it was the disturber of Thrones, the enemy of peace, and the tyrant of the people. It had been acknowledged that the Jesuits were the creatures of Rome; and, if there was to be an agitation, who would conduct it? The class who had proved themselves rebels on the Continent would do so here; but he did not believe the Jesuits would be so blind and foolish—would so miscalculate their strength—as to raise their hands in such a cause. Should troubled times arrive, the Protestant people of this country would support the dynasty which presided over its destinies. The Throne was founded on the affections of the people; and the Sovereign was not only Queen of England in respect of political and civil jurisdiction, She was head of the Church of England; and if She would but arouse the feelings which She had a right to command in defence of the Church as well as the State, those who might be suspected of harbouring designs hostile to the Protestant constitution and monarchy of this country would be baffled in their attempts. But he did not believe that the Roman Catholics would be so infatuated. If they should be so, they would excite a feeling more detrimental to the full and free exercise of their religion, and to the propagation of it, which was alleged to have been so successful, than had existed for years; and he at least would deprecate that spirit which might be expected to follow—the spirit akin to persecution which arose out of popular movements, He trusted the House would not allow itself to be led away so as to do violence to the conscientious Protestant feeling of England among Dissenters and Churchmen alike, but, on the contrary, he hoped they would allow those laws to remain on the Statute-book which experience had proved to be essential for the safety of the State.

MR. ANSTEY wished to refer to one or two points in the way of explanation. What he had stated was, that if the decision of the House was hostile to this measure, he should still persevere in the cause he had taken up; but that there were others who, for the worst purposes, would raise agitation of the kind he had adverted to. The hon. Gentleman had referred to a decoration which he had received from the Pope, by which he was supposed to have bound himself to the principles of a certain Pope, who emitted in his briefs highly anti-social opinions, such as that no faith was to be held with heretics. The hon. Gentleman, however, was wrong in his statement of the fact. The honour which he had received, and which he considered a great one, was the Order of St. Gregory the Great, the Pope who sent the first Christian missionary to this country, and not Gregory IX. The Pope who was the author of the decretals to which the hon. Gentleman had referred, came much later, and was not the Pope in whose honour this order was instituted. If the Pope in whose honour the order had been instituted emitted such detestable and anti-social opinions as the hon. Gentleman had spoken of, especially the supposed doctrine that no faith was to be held with heretics, he (Mr. Anstey) should have regarded the insignia of such an order as the greatest possible reproach.

MR. NEWDEGATE did not mean to say it was Pope Gregory IX. He adverted to the fact that it was Pope Gregory VII. who deposed the Emperor Henry IV., and he stated that the order of which the hon. Member for Youghal was a member was established in honour of that Pope who had deposed the Emperor, and also that the lessons used in the commemoration of his festival were of so objectionable a nature that they were suppressed in various Continental countries. The principles acted upon by Gregory VII., and enunciated in the lessons appointed for his Festival, were embodied in the decrees of Gregory IX., and formed part of the Roman canon law.

The EARL of ARUNDEL and SURREY did not see the necessity that existed for dividing the Bill into two, which, indeed, he regarded as an uncalled-for obstruction to the measure, which had already passed half way through Committee. He wished to advert to one or two points alluded to in the course of these discussions. Reference had been made to the *Tablet;* and he had promised to some Roman Catholic friends that he would take an opportunity of repudiating the statements made with regard to that paper. The *Tablet* was stated to be the exponent of the Papal power. [Mr. NEWDEGATE: No, of the Jesuits.] Well, of the Jesuits; but if the hon. Member who said so would read the *Gazetta di Roma,* he would find in it something not very favourable to the view he had expressed. There was no ground for the statement. As to the letter which the hon. Gentleman had quoted, a contradiction of it was sent to the *Times,* but not published there, though he believed it had appeared in some other paper. A quotation had been read by the hon. Member from a despatch of the noble Lord the Minister for Foreign Affairs bearing upon the conduct of the Jesuits with reference to Switzerland and the revolutions on the Continent. Now, the hon. Gentleman must know that in all these revolutions the Jesuits had been the first to suffer. Indeed, it could not be denied that the Jesuits were the most loyal subjects of any Government under which they lived, whether republican or despotic; and he might state, that in the late war between America and Mexico ten Jesuits had accompanied the American army for the purpose of affording instruction and consolation to the soldiers professing the Roman Catholic faith. He was not disposed to enter upon a discussion of those parts of the Bill especially objected to by the hon. Member. When they came to the consideration of the clauses, the hon. Gentleman would, most probably, again favour the House with his views, and it would then be time to take the discussion.

MR. NAPIER thought it was essentially necessary to the fair discussion of this measure, that it should be divided into two parts. The Bill itself consisted of two distinct parts, and, with respect to the one which proposed to get rid of the disabilities of the Roman Catholics, he was ready to say that if there were any disabilities still remaining offensive to them, and which could be done away without impairing the security of the Protestant institutions of the country, he was perfectly willing to see them removed from the Statute-book. He was not for retaining pains and penalties merely for their own sake. But with respect to that part of the Bill, he was prepared to say that there were no Acts of Parliament remaining which imposed such penalties; and those which still remained contained so full a recognition of the principle, and were so connected with the very fibres of the constitution, that they could not be disturbed without shaking its foundations. With respect to that part of the Bill which related to the Emancipation Act, it introduced altogether a new course of legislation. Now, he held that it was most important to the interests of the empire, that a clear distinction should be kept betwixt the loyal Roman Catholics, subjects of the empire, and those who acknowledged the authority of a foreign Power. That distinction was not his; it was one already well known and acknowledged, and had always been so. Lord Somers, who lived at the time of the Revolution, made this distinction very clearly; and it was on that principle the Act of Settlement was founded. Dr. Doyle, in a pastoral address published in 1822, stated that the Roman Catholic religion in this country was not only tolerated but protected by the law. He (Mr. Napier) maintained, therefore, that the loyal Roman Catholics had complete toleration. If it were not so, he would be the first to stand by the right side of the hon. Gentleman, and assert their right to it. When the measure of 1829 was passed, it was founded on the evidence which had been taken by Committees of Parliament, there having been an elaborate inquiry in 1816, and another in 1825. After that Act was passed, it was declared satisfactory by all the parties most interested. The Catholic hierarchy in 1830 issued an address, signed by twenty-seven prelates, in which it was described as a great boon conferred upon Ireland. But it was said, the law of 1829, which excluded the religious orders, had been violated, and on that ground a change of the law was demanded. He denied the propriety of such a course. With regard to the loyal Roman Catholics, they asked for equality of civil privileges, and they obtained them, securities being given for the safety of our institutions. But with regard to the regular clergy, no security could be given, and therefore it was concluded that their existence was incompatible with the state of things in the country; and now, because the law excluding them was violated, they were asked to make the law bend to them, instead of making them yield in the conflict to the authority of the law. If, however, it was said that matters had changed since this measure was passed—that a new order of things had arisen—then let there be inquiry into such allegations. But such a Bill as the present should not be passed without the House being satisfied that such changes had taken place as to render it necessary. What was the opinion of the noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs with reference to the Jesuits? Here the hon. and learned Gentleman read several extracts from letters written by Lord Palmerston in his correspondence relative to the affairs of Switzerland—including the one to the Marquess of Normanby, dated November 16, 1847, previously quoted, in which he described the Society of the Jesuits as having been "avowedly established to make war upon the Protestant religion;" as being "known to be exclusive and encroaching" in its ecclesiastical character; while, in its political character, it had "always been known to lean to arbitrary power, and to be averse to popular rights." Such was the language of the noble Lord at the head of the Foreign Office with respect to the Jesuits in 1847. After such evidences of the character of the Jesuits, he would ask the House, were they prepared to do away with those safeguards in this country, which had been adopted in respect of these parties in the year 1829? It appeared that, from the year 1575 to 1773, the Jesuits had been thirty-seven times expelled from various countries in which they had a footing. Every authority to which reference might be made, showed that the whole principle upon which their conduct, and that of other States, was founded, was this—that these men being bound by their system of obedience to a foreign Power, it became necessary for every country in which they established themselves to reject them. It was on that account that in the Act of 1829, with the utmost anxiety to extend the greatest toleration and the most extensive civil and political privileges to their Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, they were obliged to accompany it with precautions which they were now called upon to rescind. It was urged that if they could not make laws to expel the Jesuits, therefore they were to give them particularly free ingress into this country. Such being the state of things, what was their protection here? He would answer, it was that Protestant spirit of our institutions—that spirit which they were bound to guard—that spirit which they were bound to assert, to act upon, and manifest. They were willing to carry out emancipation in the same spirit in which it was enacted; but they should not be called upon to let these men thus by a side wind into this country, when they were told by a Member of the present Government that their principles were such as had been described. He, therefore, called upon the House to separate the two portions of the Bill, and discuss them distinctly and separately on their own merits; and whatever might be the result he, for one, would be perfectly satisfied after such a discussion.

Mr. FAGAN agreed with the hon. and learned Member for Youghal (Mr. C. Anstey), that the clauses which he was desirous to expunge from the old Acts of Parliament were gratuitous insults to the Roman Catholic subjects of this realm; but he thought that that body had too many real and practical grievances to get rid of to trouble themselves much about obsolete clauses in old Acts of Parliament. He confessed, therefore, that although he was a sincere Roman Catholic, and anxious to repudiate every insult upon his religion, he was perfectly indifferent to the result of the measure as regarded these clauses; and that had the state of the law as regarded the regular clergy stood as it did in 1844, he would have felt and acted in reference to the clause in the Emancipation Act which it was now proposed also to repeal precisely in the same way as he did with regard to the clauses of the old Acts of Parliament. And why? Because up to 1844 that clause of the Emancipation Act was as obsolete in point of law and in point of fact as any of the old clauses to which he referred. Even before the Emancipation Act was passed, it was very well understood that that clause, though inserted to gratify certain parties in both Houses of Parliament, was to remain a dead letter; and, in accordance with that understanding, it had never yet been carried into effect. If it was not so, why did the Attorney General not carry it out, as he carried out the Act against political offences in Ireland? In 1844, however, the Charitable Bequests Act was passed, by which the secular clergy of the Catholic Church were allowed to inherit property by succession, instead of being dependent, as formerly, on the honour of trustees; but this benefit was not extended to the regular clergy. This was a practical grievance under that Act. By it the regular clergy were excluded from the benefit of the Act, and the consequence was that they were to have their property vested in trustees. He had known several instances in which this had been productive of injury and injustice. He, therefore, demanded, on behalf of the regular clergy, that they should be placed on the same footing with the other clergy under the Bequests Act. With respect to the dislike borne to the Jesuits in this country, that was accounted for by the fact of their favouring the restoration of the Catholic religion after the establishment of Protestantism. But why were they expelled from various countries on the Continent? For no other reason than that they were always the determined enemies of anarchy and infidelity. There appeared to be rather an inconsistency in the argument of the hon. Member for Warwickshire when he accused the Jesuits of being favourable to revolution, yet told them that the Jesuits were expelled from Rome to please the revolutionists. In conclusion, he announced his intention of opposing the Amendments of the hon. Member for Youghal, which he considered as particularly insulting when coming from a Roman Catholic.

Sir R. H. INGLIS thanked his hon. Friend the Member for Warwickshire for the very able, the well-reasoned, and very conclusive speech which he had addressed to the House. Before proceeding to notice either the speech of his noble Friend the Member for Arundel, or that of the hon. Member who had last spoken, he thought it right to state that in any vote which he was prepared to give on the present question, he did not feel himself called upon to give a preference to one division of the Bill over the other, as he could not regard either party with any favour whatsoever. He would, therefore, leave the hon. Member for Cork, who had just sat down, to settle accounts with the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite as to the merits of the proposed clauses. Whatever might be the value of the proposed clause in the eyes of its Mover, it was quite clear that objections were taken against it by parties who, should the clause pass, would be interested in its operation. With reference to the observation of his noble Friend the Member for Arundel, that the opposition to the measure was obstructive, and, as such, injurious, he could assure his noble Friend, if he were then present—and he was sorry in his absence to be obliged to refer to anything he had said—that he never entertained any intention, nor did he think any such was felt on the part of those who acted with him, of opposing that Bill by any other means than by such as were not only technically correct, but substantially fair. He believed that, pressed as they were to alter part of a Bill which had not only the support of the Members of Government present and absent, but likewise of the late Administration, it was perfectly consistent with Parliamentary practice, that they should do their utmost to secure at least their rejection of that part of the Bill which the hon. and learned Member for Youghal (Mr. Anstey) characterised as the most important part of the whole Bill. But when he was told by the hon. and learned Member that those clauses in the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, which it was proposed to expunge, were not only inoperative in effect—and not merely so, but that they were thrown in our teeth on the occasion of a petition presented last Session to the House by the Monks of St. Bernard; when that hon. and learned Gentleman challenged them to try their strength, and put the law into force, which he felt it incumbent to remove—he resisted the conclusion to which the hon. and learned Member had come. On the very grounds which the hon. and learned Gentleman had taken, as well as for other intrinsic considerations, was he (Sir R. Inglis) prepared to agree to his proposition. The hon. and learned Gentleman made an attack upon the laws of England—upon the character of the Government, and the law officers of the Crown. "Base, cowardly, unwise, unconstitutional, absurd, impolitic conduct," were the terms applied by the hon. and learned Gentleman; "was it to continue those clauses, unless it was meant to enforce them?" By the terms of his proposition the clauses were inoperative, and therefore the conclusion he came to was that the Government was plunged into the precedent which the hon. and learned Gentleman had described by those terms, strung together like so many onions, to which he had referred. The hon. and learned Member claimed that the law should be changed because it was inoperative. So that in point of fact there was no persecution, and therefore his proposition could not be resisted. He asked the Government what right had they to prosecute Mr. Mitchel, if they were not equally ready, under an existing law, to prosecute Mr. St. Leger, the President of the College of Jesuits? If the hon. Member's case rested on his own words, it appeared there was no persecution. It should have been the hon. and learned Member's object to show that these men could not enjoy the freedom of their religious worship. They were told that the number of persons affected by the law amounted to one-third of the Roman Catholic clergy of this empire, and made an appeal on that account for its alteration. Yet the hon. and learned Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Napier) had stated that the clauses in question had been, before the passing of the Relief Bill, shown to all the leading members of the Church of Rome, who had not only accepted the Bill with contentment, but gratitude. The experience which they had gained since the passing of the Emancipation Act, should be a warning to them not to trust to the arguments and statements of the hon. Member for Youghal, and more especially as the hon. Member for Cork also demanded the repeal of an existing law—that which was passed in 1844. If they were told that the question was one to be decided, not by reason or discussion, but by the efforts of people out of doors, he would answer, that they were not to be biassed by threat or clamour. So long as the constitutional institutions of this country existed, so long he trusted they would do their duty and decide calmly and deliberately on the question before them. With the hon. and learned Member for the University of Dublin, he too would say, "To reason and conviction I will yield everything; to threat and menace nothing." He believed the present matter was purely a question of discretion and expediency. Another minor question had been raised in the course of the discussion, as to what might be considered the correct exponent of the opinions of the Church of Rome in this country. It was not enough to rest those opinions on the statements of individual Members of that House of the Roman Catholic persuasion. There was other evidence, they were told, circulating throughout the world, of the nature of those opinions. He agreed with his hon. Friend the Member for Warwickshire, that they were entitled to take the *Tablet* as the organ of the opinion of the greater portion of the population of this country professing that faith. His noble Friend the Member for Arundel could, in his charity, forgive anything addressed to him; but he could say nothing of that portion addressed to the hon. and learned Member for Youghal by the same. The hon. Baronet then referred to the *Tablet*, and read a portion from it, wherein, in contradiction to something stated by the individual to whom the article referred, it was said "that the opinion of the Pope was a command." If that were the case, he warned the House against giving any more authority in this country to one who already exercised in it, not by law, but against the law, a power dangerous to its best interests. The attainment of that extraordinary power, however, was what the hon. and learned Member for Youghal sought by his proposition. He would refer to the speech of the hon. Member for Cork. On a former occasion it had been observed that England was full of Jesuits. It had been said also that one-third of the Roman Catholic clergy were Jesuits, or members of some of those religious orders which it was the object of the Bill of 1829 to diminish or exclude. If such was the fact now, while the law stood as it did, what, he asked, would be the effect of removing the very slight barrier which resisted their introduction? He could not but feel that there was in that circumstance also sufficient grounds for the resistance which they offered to the measure. The hon. and learned Gentleman might have reserved every sentence of his unprovoked speech for a future stage of the proceedings; but as he had engaged the House in a discussion on its principle, he was not entitled to say a word at any future period of the discussion, nor attack them hereafter for any delay which might have taken place. He did not like to refer in his absence to anything which had fallen from his noble Friend the Member for Arundel; but when his noble Friend quoted the Jesuits as being amongst the most loyal subjects in any State in which they were, he could not help asking his noble Friend whether there was not a most singular consistency in error on the part of every Government in Europe—a consistency in error to which no parallel existed in history —that in thirty-five instances, within the course of three centuries, these most loyal subjects had been successively expelled by every Government and from every country in Europe? He would ask also any of their advocates whether the Jesuits would not prefer remaining in this country under existing laws, not enforced against them, rather than remove to any other part of the world—to the freest or most despotic State? For his own part he believed that a great practical evil existed by the presence of these persons in this country, and if he could not remove them he would do nothing to encourage them; and, therefore, he was prepared to give all the opposition in his power to any measure which would go to legalise their existence, or give any further power to that Church of which they were members.

Mr. SHEIL said, he would not occupy the attention of the House for more than three or four minutes; but he rose for the purpose of quoting a great authority in favour of the Jesuits, which might perhaps countervail that of the hon. and learned Member for the University of Dublin, and that of the noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, which had been so much relied on. The authority he was about to quote was no less than that of Lord Stanley, who was one of the props of the corporation of the Church. Lord Stanley, speaking of the college at Stonyhurst, said, the Jesuits diffused there a useful system of education, and were of the utmost advantage to the neighbourhood. He contented himself with referring to the authority of Lord Stanley on this subject. [An Hon. Member: When was that spoken?] In 1829, upon the very clause they were now discussing; but he did not think that that circumstance took away from the authority. Lord Stanley had had peculiar opportunities of knowing the Jesuits; he was Member for Lancashire, and Stonyhurst was not a very great distance from Knowsley. Under these circumstances he thought the authority of Lord Stanley was not inappropriate. With respect to the Jesuits, it was admitted that the clause was inoperative, and the consequence was that they maintained upon the Statute-book a stigma of no avail to themselves, but wounding to Roman Catholics. He thought it was a reproach to the English criminal law, and a scandal to the criminal code, that Jesuits coming into this country should be liable to transportation for fourteen years. He was, however, less solicitous upon that part of the Bill, and he believed that the Roman Catholics of Ireland were less anxious upon it, than upon that part which did inflict a practical grievance upon them—he meant in the exclusion of Catholics from the Lord Chancellorship of Ireland. As the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the University of Dublin had made on this occasion a speech characterised by the forensic subtlety by which he was so much distinguished at the bar, he would venture to call the hon. and learned Gentleman's attention to the authority of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland. Upon the appointment of the present Chancellor, he adopted the course of writing to inquire what was the extent of patronage which the Lord Chancellor had in the Church; and this was his answer:—

> "My dear Sheil—In reply to your inquiry as to the patronage of the Lord Chancellor in the Church, I can state to you that the Lord Chancellor of Ireland has not any patronage whatsoever except under an Irish Act, by which he is joined with the Archbishop of the province, the three chief judges" (one of whom, the Chief Baron, was a Roman Catholic), "and the Master of the Rolls, in the patronage of two parishes—St. Andrew's and St. Mark's, in Dublin. He has, in fact, no duty to discharge in relation to the Established Church save that of putting the great seal to the appointments made by the Crown, which being a matter of course"—let hon. Members mark these words—"I know of nothing connected with the office that ought to disqualify a member of the Roman Catholic Church from holding it; and I can sincerely add, that the Roman Catholic bar of Ireland has produced men abundantly qualified to do honour to the seals."

He knew not that he could quote a higher authority than that to establish beyond all doubt that the Lord Chancellor of Ireland had no ecclesiastical patronage whatsoever. There was no doubt that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Tamworth, in excluding Catholics from the Chancellorship of Ireland, was influenced by the opinion that there was ecclesiastical patronage attached to the office, and it was so stated in a debate on the Roman Catholic Relief Bill. Under those circumstances, was it not an act of common justice to alter the law in that respect? The hon. and learned Member for the University of Dublin said, if it could be shown that Roman Catholics laboured under a practical grievance, and no evil could arise to the Established Church, he would consent to the repeal of the law. He had demonstrated that this was a practical grievance, and that, as the Chancellor had no patronage in the Church, the appointment of a Roman Catholic to that office could be no evil to the Church. It was quite clear that the proposition to divide the Bill was, he would not say an unfair, but a party expedient to delay the Bill; and to delay it, in this instance, was clearly a procrastination of right.

MR. HENRY DRUMMOND could not have mixed so long with Roman Catholic families and with Roman Catholic society—he could not have resided so much in Roman Catholic countries as he had done—without knowing and feeling that there was a most essential difference between the dead Papists of books and real live Roman Catholics. He certainly fully admitted the evils they had done in times past; but all whom he had the honour of being acquainted with—and he was intimate with many, and also lived not very far from one of the seminaries of the Jesuits themselves—were as harmless a set of persons as he ever knew in his life. But he rose specially to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman who had just spoken, one single point. When on a former occasion he brought forward the instance of the cook-boy, as a proof of the obedience required by the Jesuits, it was said that it was merely the obedience that every one should observe. Fortunately for him, everything that he had said on that occasion had been exactly misrepresented in the public papers, and an attack was made upon him why he could be so foolish to talk about Roman Catholics, and not know perfectly well that there was no oath of obedience taken by the Jesuits that was not taken by every Roman Catholic? There was no distinction whatever, and he now held in his hand his own refutation. The hon. Member here proceeded to read a passage from some newspaper, and went on to say that he was quite willing to vote for every practical object to which the hon. and learned Gentleman had alluded. Let every Roman Catholic call himself what he liked—Jesuit or anything else. It was of no use to keep him out under one name, for he would change his name and come in under another directly. Parliament had no more business to make laws about Roman Catholic religious orders, than they had to make laws with respect to the Methodists or other Dissenting bodies.

The House divided on the question that it be an instruction to the Committee to divide the Bill:—Ayes 142; Noes 129: Majority 13.

List of the AYES.

Adderley, C. B.
Archdall, Capt. M.
Arkwright, G.
Bagot, hon. W.
Bailey, J.
Baillie, H. J.
Baldock, E. H.
Bateson, T.
Benbow, J.
Bentinck, Lord H.
Beresford, W.
Bernard, Visct.
Blackstone, W. S.
Boldero, H. G.
Bolling, W.
Bourke, R. S.
Bramston, T. W.
Bremridge, R.
Broadley, H.
Brooke, Lord
Buck, L. W.
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Burghley, Lord
Cholmeley, Sir M.
Christopher, R. A.
Clive, H. B.
Cobbold, J. C.
Coles, H. B.
Colvile, C. R.
Compton, H. C.
Corry, rt. hon. H. L.
Cotton, hon. W. H. S.
Cubitt, W.
Dick, Q.
Dod, J. W.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Dundas, G.
Du Pre, C. G.
East, Sir J. B.
Egerton, W. T.
Estcourt, J. B. B.
Euston, Earl of
Forester, hon. G. C. W.
Fox, S. W. L.
Fuller, A. E.
Goddard, A. L.
Gore, W. R. O.
Goring, C.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Granby, Marq. of
Greenal, G.
Grogan, E.
Gwyn, H.
Halford, Sir H.
Halsey, T. P.
Hamilton, G. A.
Hamilton, J. H.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Harris, hon. Capt.
Heald, J.
Henley, J. W.
Hildyard, R. C.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hill, Lord E.
Hodgson, W. N.
Hood, Sir A.
Hope, Sir J.
Hotham, Lord
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Jones, Capt.
Knox, Col.
Lacy, H. C.
Lennox, Lord H. G.
Lewis, rt. hon. Sir T. F.
Lockhart, W.
Lowther, hon. Col.
Lygon, hon. Gen.
Mackenzie, W. F.
Macnaghten, Sir E.
M'Neill, D.
Mahon, Visct.
Mandeville, Visct.
Manners, Lord C. S.
March, Earl of
Maunsell, T. P.
Meux, Sir H.
Miles, W.
Moody, C. A.
Morgan, O.
Napier, J.
Neeld, J.
Neeld, J.
Noel, hon. G. J.
Oswald, A.
Packe, C. W.
Palmer, R.
Pennant, hon. Col.
Perfect, R.
Pigott, F.
Plowden, W. H. C.
Powell, Col.
Prime, R.
Pugh, D.
Rendlesham, Lord
Repton, G. W. J.
Richards, R.
Rolleston, Col.
Rufford, F.
Sandars, G.
Scott, hon. F.
Seymour, Sir H.
Shirley, E. J.
Sibthorp, Col.
Slaney, R. A.
Smyth, J. G.
Smollett, A.
Somerset, Capt.
Sotheron, T. H. S.
Spooner, R.
Stafford, A.
Stuart, J.
Sturt, H. G.
Talfourd, Serj.
Thornhill, G.
Tollemache, J.
Turner, G. J.
Tyrell, Sir J. T.
Verner, Sir W.
Villiers, Visct.
Villiers, hon. F. W. C.
Vyse, R. H. R. H.
Waddington, D.
Walpole, S. H.
Walsh, Sir J. B.
Wawn, J. T.
West, F. R.
Willoughby, Sir H.
Wodehouse, E.
Worcester, Marq. of
Wynn, Sir W. W.
Young, Sir J.

TELLERS.

Law, hon. C. E.
Newdegate, C. N.

List of the NOES.

Adair, H. E.
Adair, R. A. S.
Aglionby, H. A.
Armstrong, Sir A.
Armstrong, R. B.
Bagshaw, J.

Baines, M. T.
Bellew, R. M.
Berkeley, hon. G. F.
Birch, Sir T. B.
Blake, M. J.
Bouverie, hon. E. P.
Brotherton, J.
Brown, W.
Buxton, Sir E. N.
Carter, J. B.
Cavendish, hon. G. H.
Clay, Sir W.
Clements, hon. C. S.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Craig, W. G.
Crawford, W. S.
Dalrymple, Capt.
Drummond, H.
Duff, G. S.
Duncan, Visct.
Dunne, F. P.
Elliot, hon. J. E.
Evans, Sir De L.
Evans, J.
Evans, W.
Fagan, W.
Fagan, J.
Foley, J. H. H.
Forster, M.
Fortescue, C.
Fox, R. M.
Freestun, Col.
Gladstone, rt. hn. W.E.
Grace, O. D. J.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Granger, T. C.
Grattan, H.
Greene, J.
Grenfell, C. P.
Grenfell, C. W.
Haggitt, F. R.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Hastie, A.
Hawes, B.
Hayter, W. G.
Henry, A.
Hervey, Lord A.
Hobhouse, T. B.
Hodges, T. L.
Hodges, T. T.
Hope, A.
Howard, hon. C. W. G.
Howard, P. H.
Hume, J.
Humphery, Aldm.
Jervis, Sir J.
Keogh, W.
Kershaw, J.
Lascelles, hon. W. L.
Lawless, hon. C.
Locke, J.
Lushington, C.
Macnamara, Maj.
M'Cullagh, W. T.
Magan, W. H.
Meagher, T.
Mahon, The O'Gorman
Maitland, T.
Marshall, J. G.
Martin, S.
Matheson, Col.
Milner, W. M. E.
Milnes, R. M.
Mitchell, T. A.
Monsell, W.
Morgan, H. K. G.
Mulgrave, Earl of
Norreys, Lord
O'Brien, T.
O'Connell, M.
O'Connell, M. J.
O'Connor, F.
O'Flaherty, A.
Pechell, Capt.
Pilkington, J.
Power, Dr.
Pusey, P.
Raphael, A.
Rawdon, Col.
Reynolds, J.
Ricardo, O.
Rich, H.
Robartes, T. J. A.
Romilly, Sir J.
Russell, F. C. H.
Rutherfurd, A.
Scholefield, W.
Scrope, G. P.
Shafto, R. D.
Sheil, rt. hon. R. L.
Sheridan, R. B.
Simeon, J.
Smith, J. B.
Somerville, rt. hn. Sir W.
Spearman, H. J.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Sullivan, M.
Talbot, J. H.
Tenison, E. K.
Thicknesse, R. A.
Thompson, Col.
Thornely, T.
Towneley, C.
Towneley, J.
Townshend, Capt.
Turner, E.
Watkins, Col.
Williams, J.
Williamson, Sir H.
Wilson, J.
Wood, W. P.
Wynn, rt. hon. C. W. W.
Wyvill, M.

TELLERS.

Anstey, T. C.
Arundel and Surrey, Earl of

House in Committee.

On the first question in Committee being put,

Mr. A. STAFFORD moved that the Chairman report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

After some discussion, the Committee divided on the question, that the Chairman do report progress: — Ayes 111: Noes 161; Majority 50.

List of the AYES.

Adderley, C. B.
Archdall, Capt.
Arkwright, G.
Baldock, E. H.
Barrington, Visct.
Bateson, T.
Benbow, J.
Bennet, P.
Beresford, W.
Bernard, Visct.
Blackstone, W. S.
Boldero, H. G.
Bremridge, R.
Broadley, H.
Brooke, Lord
Buck, L. W.
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Burghley, Lord
Burroughes, H. N.
Chichester, Lord J. L.
Cholmeley, Sir M.
Clive, H. B.
Cobbold, J. C.
Colvile, C. R.
Compton, H. C.
Conolly, Col.
Cotton, hon. W. H. S.
Cubitt, W.
Davies, D. A. S.
Dod, J. W.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Duncuft, J.
Dundas, G.
Du Pre, C. G.
Farrer, J.
Forbes, W.
Forester, hon. G. C. W.
Fox, S. W. L.
Frewen, C. H.
Fuller, A. E.
Galway, Visct.
Goddard, A. L.
Gore, W. R. O.
Grenall, G.
Grogan, E.
Gwyn, H.
Halsey, T. P.
Hamilton, G. A.
Hamilton, J. H.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Harris, hon. Capt.
Heald, J.
Henley, J. W.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hood, Sir A.
Hope, Sir J.
Hornby, J.
Hotham, Lord
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Knox, Col.
Law, hon. C. E.
Lennox, Lord H. G.
Lindsay, hon. Col.
Lockhart, W.
Mackenzie, W. F.
Macnaghten, Sir E.
Mandeville, Visct.
Manners, Lord C. S.
March, Earl of
Maxwell, hon. J. P.
Meux, Sir H.
Miles, W.
Morgan, O.
Napier, J.
Neeld, J.
Neeld, J.
Newdegate, C. N.
Noel, hon. G. J.
Packe, C. W.
Palmer, R.
Plowden, W. H. C.
Powell, Col.
Pugh, D.
Rendlesham, Lord
Repton, G. W. J.
Richards, R.
Rufford, F.
Sandars, G.
Sibthorp, Col.
Smyth, J. G.
Somerset, Capt.
Spooner, R.
Stuart, J.
Sturt, H. G.
Taylor, T. E.
Tollemache, J.
Tyrell, Sir J. T.
Vyse, R. H. R. H.
Waddington, D.
Walpole, S. H.
Walsh, Sir J. B.
Welby, G. E.
Willoughby, Sir H.
Wodehouse, E.
Worcester, Marq. of
Wortley, rt. hon. J. S.
Wynn, rt. hn. C. W. W.
Wynn, Sir W. W.

TELLERS.

Goring, C.
Stafford, A.

List of the AYES.

Acland, Sir T. D.
Adair, H. E.
Adair, R. A. S.
Armstrong, Sir A.
Armstrong, R. B.
Bagshaw, J.
Bailey, J.
Barron, Sir H. W.
Bellew, R. M.
Birch, Sir T. B.
Blake, M. J.
Bourke, R. S.
Bouverie, hon. E. P.
Bowring, Dr.
Bramston, T. W.
Brotherton, J.

Campbell, hon. W. F.
Carter, J. B.
Cavendish, hon. G. H.
Clay, J.
Clements, hon. C. S.
Craig, W. G.
Crawford, W. S.
Dalrymple, Capt.
Davie, Sir H. R. F.
Devereux, J. T.
Drummond, H.
Duff, J.
Duncan, Visct.
Duncan, G.
Dunne, F. P.
East, Sir J. B.
Elliot, hon. J. E.
Estcourt, J. B. B.
Evans, Sir De L.
Evans, W.
Fagan, W.
Fagan, J.
FitzPatrick, rt. hn. J. W.
Foley, J. H. H.
Forster, M.
Fox, R. M.
Freestun, Col.
French, F.
Gibson, rt. hon. T. M.
Gladstone, rt. hn. W. E.
Glyn, G. C.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Grace, O. D. J.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Granger, T. C.
Grattan, H.
Greene, J.
Greene, T.
Grenfell, C. P.
Grenfell, C. W.
Haggitt, F. R.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Hardcastle, J. A.
Hastie, A.
Hawes, B.
Hayter, W. G.
Headlam, T. E.
Heneage, G. H. W.
Henry, A.
Herbert, H. A.
Hervey, Lord A.
Hobhouse, T. B.
Hope, A.
Howard, hon. C. W. G.
Howard, P. H.
Hume, J.
Humphery, Ald.
Jackson, W.
Jervis, Sir J.
Keating, R.
Keogh, W.
Kershaw, J.
Langston, J. H.
Lascelles, hon. E.
Lascelles, hon. W. S.
Lawless, hon. C.
Lewis, rt. hn. Sir T. F.
Locke, J.
Lushington, C.
Macnamara, Maj.
M'Cullagh, W. T.
Magan, W. H.
Meagher, T.
Mahon, The O'Gorman
Mahon, Visct.
Maitland, T.
Marshall, J. G.
Martin, S.
Matheson, Col.
Milner, W. M. E.
Milnes, R. M.
Mitchell, T. A.
Monsell, W.
Morgan, H. K. G.
Morpeth, Visct.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Mulgrave, Earl of
Mure, Col.
Norreys, Lord
Nugent, Sir P.
O'Brien, T.
O'Connell, M.
O'Connor, F.
O'Flaherty, A.
Paget, Lord C.
Paget, Lord G.
Pearson, C.
Pechell, Capt.
Pennant, hon. Col.
Perfect, R.
Pigott, F.
Pilkington, J.
Power, Dr.
Pusey, P.
Raphael, A.
Rawdon, Col.
Reynolds, J.
Ricardo, J. L.
Rice, E. R.
Rich, H.
Robartes, T. J. A.
Romilly, Sir J.
Russell, F. C. H.
Rutherfurd, A.
Sadlier, J.
Scholefield, W.
Scully, F.
Shafto, R. D.
Sheil, rt. hon. R. L.
Simeon, J.
Smith, J. B.
Somerville, rt. hon. Sir W.
Sotheron, T. H. S.
Spearman, H. J.
Talbot, J. H.
Talfourd, Serj.
Tenison, E. K.
Thicknesse, R. A.
Thompson, Col.
Thornely, T.
Towneley, C.
Towneley, J.
Townshend, Capt.
Turner, E.
Turner, G. J.
Tynte, Col.
Villiers, hon. C.
Wall, C. B.
Watkins, Col.
Wawn, J. T.
Williams, J.
Wilson, J.
Wood, W. P.
Wyvill, M.
Young, Sir J.

TELLERS.

Aglionby, H. A.
Anstey, T. C.

No further progress was made with the Bill before Six o'clock, when the House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, June 1, 1848.

MINUTES. NEW MEMBER SWORN. Joseph Randolph Mullings, Esq., for Cirencester.

PUBLIC BILLS.—1° Highways.

2° Metropolis Police.

Reported.—Incumbered Estates (Ireland); Administration of Justice (No. 1); Administration of Justice (No. 2); Protection of Justices from Vexatious Actions.

3° and passed; Tobago Relief and Immigration into British Guiana and Trinidad.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Dr. Bowring, Mr. Ewart, and other Hon. Members, from an Immense Number of Places, for an Extension of the Elective Franchise.—By Mr. Devereux, from Wexford, and from the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor and Citizens of Dublin, in favour of a Repeal of the Union with Ireland.—By Mr. Alexander Hastie, from Members of the Free Church Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, respecting *Quoad Sacra* Churches (Scotland).—By Mr. Cobden, from the Baptist Congregation at Eyre Street Chapel, Sheffield, for Discouragement of Idolatry in India.—By Mr. Broadley, from Members of the Congregation of Wesleyan Methodists at Keyingham, Yorkshire, and by other Hon. Members, from several Places, for Better Observance of the Lord's Day.—By Mr. Baillie, from Portree, in the Isle of Skye, and by other Hon. Members, from several Places, in favour of the Places of Worship (Scotland) Bill.—By Mr. Cobbold, from Dewsbury, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, for a Repeal of the Duty on Attorneys' Certificates.—By Mr. Hastings Russell, from Members of several Lodges of the Ancient Order of Foresters, for an Extension of the Benefit Societies Act.—By Sir J. Jervis, from the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of Chester, for Extending the Jurisdiction of the County Courts.—By Lord Claud Hamilton, from Tyrone, and other Places, for Encouragement to Schools in Connexion with the Church Education Society (Ireland); also from Armagh, for an Alteration of the Imprisonment for Debt (Ireland) Bill.—By Mr. Forbes, from the Commissioners of Supply, for Kirkcudbright, and from other Places, against the Lunatic Asylums (Scotland) Bill.—By Mr. William Miles, from Guardians of the Poor of the Frome Union, Somerset, for Alteration of the Law respecting Mendicants.—By Lord G. Bentinck, from Leith, and by other Hon. Members, from several Places, against a Repeal of the Navigation Laws.—By Mr. Hodges, from Poor Law Officers in the County of Kent, and other Places, in favour of a Superannuation Fund for Poor Law Officers.—By Mr. Masterman, from Inhabitants of the Parish of St. Michael, Cornhill, London, against the Public Health Bill.—By Captain Fordyce, from Members of the Seven Incorporated Trades of Old Aberdeen, suggesting the Grant of Loans for Railways (Scotland).

SIR THOMAS TURTON.

VISCOUNT JOCELYN wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Control if the reports which had appeared in the public papers to the effect that great deficiencies had been discovered to exist in the accounts of the chief officer of the Ecclesiastical Courts in India, amounting, it was said, to less than 100,000*l.*, were true; and if so, whether these deficiencies were to be made up by Her Majesty's Government or by the East India Company? He also wished to know whether it was the intention of Government to take any steps to prevent the recurrence of such disgraceful conduct?

Sir J. C. HOBHOUSE: With extreme regret he had to state, in reply to the noble Lord, that Sir Thomas Turton, the Registrar of the Ecclesiastical Court at Calcutta, had been guilty of the offence imputed to him. The defalcations of the registrar, though not amounting to so large a sum as the noble Lord had stated, were still very large, and the securities he gave when he accepted the office, would, if applied to that purpose, go but a little way in making them up. With respect to the noble Lord's second question, he was sorry to say he could not give him a satisfactory answer. The East India Company protested against the deficiency being charged on the revenues of India; and he feared his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer would protest against its being charged on the revenue of England. With respect to the third question, he had to inform the noble Lord that on receipt of the intelligence from India, he thought it his duty to consult the law officer of the Crown with respect to the punishment of the party implicated, in order to ascertain whether it would not be advisable to indict him; but the opinion of that Gentleman was not favourable to such a course. He (Sir J. C. Hobhouse) had informed the Government of India of the circumstance, and the authorities in that country were preparing a measure by which they would prevent the recurrence of any such delinquency.

OATHS OF MEMBERS—THE FRANCHISE.

Lord J. RUSSELL: I wish, Sir, to give two notices of Motions. The first is, of my intention on Monday next to ask for leave to bring in a Bill to alter the form of oath which is taken by Members on taking their seats in Parliament. The other is, that on Friday next I will move for leave to bring in a Bill to repeal so much of the existing law as makes it necessary to pay the assessed taxes before registration as electors for cities and boroughs.

WRIT FOR DERBY.

Mr. COLVILE rose to move—

"That Mr. Speaker do issue his warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a New Writ for the electing of two Burgesses to serve in this present Parliament for the borough of Derby, in the room of the right hon. Edward Frederick Leveson Gower, whose Election has been determined to be void."

He disclaimed all party motives, and felt convinced that the House would be influenced only by considerations of right in whatever determination they might arrive at. He was as anxious for inquiry as any Member in the House; but meantime he thought the writ should be granted.

Mr. STAFFORD would ask how many Members who had read this petition from a town of 45,000 inhabitants, and how many who had not read it, were prepared to trifle with the privileges of 2,000 persons, representing the political power of that town? What would be the consequence of the proceedings of that House upon this subject if they withheld this writ? A. offered a bribe to B., and B. received it; C. petitioned against both, and all three were then disfranchised. That was the justice that that House was prepared to deal out. Why, supposing C. to have the average amount of common sense, he would of course be very unwilling to present a petition, enter into recognisances, and incur a large expenditure, when he knew that the result would be his own disfranchisement. Two were guilty, one was innocent, and the whole three were punished equally. Could that be called impartial justice? And yet it was the course adopted by those who considered themselves models of fairness. If the result of election petitions were to be, that all parties, whether guilty or innocent, were to be punished with disfranchisement, the natural result would be, that those who were innocent would rather allow corruption to go on, than take a step which must end in their own political destruction. Let them not, by refusing to issue this writ to a town containing a population of 45,000, establish for themselves a character for injustice and oppression. It was quite unreasonable that this writ should be suspended until the Bill of the hon. Baronet the Member for Flint was passed. That Bill had now been before the House seven weeks, and it had still to go through Committee, to go through a third reading, and to be passed by the other House; and if double the length of time that had already elapsed had still to elapse before those forms could be complied with, he asked the House where by that time would be the present Session? Time after time, and day after day, the glaring injustice they were inflicting on the constituencies of this kingdom should be brought under the notice of the country; and time after time, and day after day, divisions should test who those Members were, who, professing purity and patriotism, were still determined to withhold from their fellow-subjects those political privileges to which they were so justly entitled.

Mr. HUME said, the hon. Gentleman assumed that, by refusing to issue the writ, they would be acting unjustly to their fellow-subjects. The fact was just the reverse. Certain corrupt practices had extensively taken place, and therefore it was but justice to the community at large not to allow those who had been guilty of those practices to continue them. Although the necessary course to be taken might be hard upon individuals, it was but an act of justice to the great body of the community. When the first writ this Session was moved for, he stated his views with respect to this matter, namely, that where a Committee of that House had investigated charges of bribery, and had called the attention of the House to the subject, a rule ought to be laid down that no writ should be issued for any borough before an inquiry had been instituted to ascertain to what extent the corrupt practices had been carried on; in order, if possible, to apply a remedy. Such was evidently the intention of that House in the rule which declared that any corrupt practices at elections were a breach of the privileges of the House. In conformity with that rule he still objected to their issuing any writ where the report of the Committee had expressly stated that the electors had been guilty of corrupt practices. The Committee reported in this case, that a certain number of individuals had been bribed, and that it was the custom in Derby, and observed at the last election, for a certain number of electors to be placed upon committees in order to be paid for their services. It was therefore the duty of the House to suspend the writ, in order to prevent these persons being guilty of a repetition of such practices. In justice to the country at large, and to uphold the Standing Orders of that House, he should certainly take the sense of the House against the issuing of this writ.

Sir GEORGE GREY apprehended that the question before the House was not an inquiry into the extent to which corruption had existed at the last election for the borough of Derby, and at previous elections; but, whether the evidence which had been taken by the Committee, and referred to in the special report, was sufficient to justify them in suspending the writ for an indefinite period. No one wanted to expose himself to the charge of throwing a veil over bribery and corruption; but he must say that he was prepared to meet that charge rather than agree to an indefinite suspension of the writ for a large constituency, on a large part of which not the slightest imputation existed. This case was totally distinct from that of Yarmouth. In the Yarmouth case the report stated that great corruption existed amongst the freemen, and that the corruption was amongst the freemen only. It was therefore recommended that the freemen should be disfranchised before the writ was issued. But the Committee had made no such recommendation in the case of Derby. They only stated that a practice existed at the last election of placing freemen as members of nominal committees, and paying them for their services. The charges contained in the report of the Committee referred to only about 400 out of the 1,900 of whom the constituency consisted; and upon the remaining 1,500 not the slightest imputation had been cast. He certainly thought that further inquiry ought to be instituted, with a view to the disfranchisement of those parties who had been guilty of those corrupt practices, or to apply any other legislative remedy that might be considered expedient. If the writ were now refused, he apprehended that the same grounds would exist for refusal for the remainder of the Session, or until the Bill of his hon. Friend the Member for Flint, which could scarcely pass both Houses of the Legislature before the termination of this Session, had passed, and the inquiry which that Bill proposed to sanction had been carried to a conclusion. If they refused to issue this writ, they would sanction the principle laid down by the hon. Member for Montrose, that in no case where a Member was unseated for bribery, whatever the amount of evidence might be, however few the cases of bribery committed, the writ should not issue until an inquiry, sanctioned by the Legislature, had been instituted as to the extent of the bribery that had been committed. He must say, without expressing an opinion as to what course would be right for the House to take in any other case, he thought the House had already marked its sense of the conduct of the freemen of the borough of Derby, by suspending for a considerable period the issuing of the writ, and by refusing the borough the right of being represented for a considerable number of weeks. He thought it was quite right also that further inquiry should take place, but he did not see any reason, pending that inquiry, that 1,500 ten-pound householders, against whom no imputation had been cast, should be unrepresented. Without reference to what the opinion upon this subject of any other Gentleman with whom he was connected might be, he should certainly vote for the Motion of the hon. Gentleman.

The EARL of LINCOLN said, it would be perfectly easy to retain Derby in the schedule; but what possible object would there be in the inquiry if the writ were issued? The certain consequence of issuing the writ now would be, that the very parties that the Committee had informed the House were, not only at the last election, but at preceding elections, invariably paid in one shape or another for their votes, would of course take very good care that the next election should be perfectly pure, and at the inquiry that would take place it would be proved that one election had passed over with comparative purity; and yet the object of the inquiry would be to punish those very individuals they were now to exonerate and reward, by again allowing the exercise of their political privileges. He could not see how they could now issue this writ with consistency, after the statements that were made a short time ago. The right hon. Gentleman was now willing to consent to the issue of this writ, on account of the delay that had taken place with regard to the Bill of the hon. Member for Flint. He ventured, when this case was before the House on a former occasion, namely, seven weeks ago, to call upon the noble Lord at the head of the Government to bring in that Bill himself; because such a Bill in the hands of his hon. Friend must be prosecuted without any prospect—much less certainty—of success. He firmly believed that if they now issued this writ, the Bill of his hon. Friend would linger in its present state until the end of the Session, and the result of issuing this writ would be that they must issue all the others. He could not himself see that there was much distinction to be drawn between the cases of Yarmouth and Derby. In the case of Derby, nine acts of bribery were reported, which were considered sufficient for the Committee to report. The result of the inquiry might prove that Yarmouth was grossly guilty, and Derby comparatively innocent; but as the information before the House at present stood, no distinction appeared between the two, and he felt confident that if they now issued the writ, the Bill of his hon. Friend would not be persevered in this Session; there would be no investigation into the case; and, if that were so, he must say he thought they would be trifling with the question altogether, and it would have been better if they had never stopped any of these writs. He also thought that such a course would be stamping their character with vacillation, and would lead the country to doubt the sincerity of the propositions which had been made with respect to this matter.

SIR J. HANMER said that, after what he had heard from the right hon. the Secretary for the Home Department, he felt that the chance of his passing the Borough Elections Bill was very remote. If the House should issue a writ to a borough which was tainted by corruption, the main argument in favour of proceeding rapidly with his Bill, would be removed. He believed that he should have made some progress with the Bill in Committee, if, when he proposed that the House should go into Committee on it, the hon. Member for Lambeth had not made a long speech which nobody wanted to hear. This was not a fortunate day to propose the issuing of a writ for Derby, for had they not heard a case as great and as important as that of Derby reported to-day? The borough of Leicester had been found so utterly corrupt, that the Chairman of the Committee, in the discharge of his duty, recommended that case to the particular attention of the House. With respect to his Bill, he believed that if Gentlemen would meet it fairly it might be decided upon in the course of next week.

MR. GOULBURN was anxious to vindicate his conduct in respect to this measure from a suspicion of his being actuated by a desire to connive at corruption or bribery in the borough of Derby. That which influenced him in the matter was the opinion he entertained as to the dangerous power of the House in suspending the issue of writs. He could foresee a period when that power might be used to serve the purposes of a majority, and to the suppression of a free and independent opinion on the part of the representatives of the people. It had been said that there were many constituencies among whom practices similar to those prevailing at Derby were to be found. If that were so, the House would soon have petitions from those boroughs for the suspension of the writs, if the House were to adopt the principle that was now contended for. The result would be, that a large number of boroughs would soon be altogether unrepresented. He did not believe that the issuing of the writ in this case would at all affect the power of the House to inquire into the practices of corruption in the borough of Derby. He was, therefore, prepared to vote for the issuing of the writ.

Mr. MUNTZ was astonished at the speech of the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department. He could not understand why, when the people in every borough in the country were complaining of the corrupt practices that were carried on at the late election, the Government should come forward and throw their shield over the evildoers. The suspicion entertained by the people against the Government was not only very strong, but was becoming daily much more strong, and he would warn the Government that they must be prepared either to assist in effecting further social and political reforms, or give up the Government. It had been said that the freemen were chiefly the guilty parties at the recent elections; but he would ask whether the 10*l.* householders were altogether free from guilt? He would inflict punishment not only on the parties who committed the wrong, but on those who connived at it. He suspected that a large portion of the Members of that House bought their places, and were not the freely-elected Members of the people.

The House divided:—Ayes 136; Noes 153: Majority 17.

List of the Ayes.

Adderley, C. B.
Anstey, T. C.
Arkwright, G.
Bailey, J.
Baillie, H. J.
Baldock, E. H.
Bankes, G.
Baring, H. B.
Barrington, Visct.
Barron, Sir H. W.
Bellew, R. M.
Benbow, J.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Beresford, W.
Berkeley, hon. Capt.
Blandford, Marq. of
Boldero, H. G.
Bolling, W.
Bourke, R. S.
Bowles, Adm.
Boyd, J.
Bramston, T. W.
Bremridge, R.
Brooke, Lord
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Buller, C.
Carew, W. H. P.
Chaplin, W. J.
Childers, J. W.
Christy, S.
Clive, H. B.
Cobbold, J. C.
Coke, hon. E. K.
Conolly, Col.
Cotton, hon. W. H. S.
Dalrymple, Capt.
Davies, D. A. S.
Denison, J. E.
Dick, Q.
Dod, J. W.
Dodd, G.
Dunne, F. P.
Du Pre, C. G.
Euston, Earl of
Forbes, W.
Fuller, A. E.
Galway, Visct.
Godson, R.
Goring, C.
Goulburn, right hon. H.
Grace, O. D. J.
Greene, T.
Grenfell, C. W.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Hall, Col.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Harris, hon. Capt.
Hay, Lord J.
Herries, rt. hon. J. C.
Hildyard, R. C.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hodgson, W. N.
Hope, Sir J.
Houldsworth, T.
Hudson, G.
Ingestre, Visct.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Jocelyn, Visct.
Johnstone, Sir J.
Keppel, hon. G. T.
Kerrison, Sir E.
Knox, Col.
Labouchere, rt. hon. H.
Lascelles, hon. E.
Lascelles, hon. W. S.
Lewis, G. C.
Lowther, hon. Col.
Lygon, hon. Gen.
Mackenzie, W. F.
Mackinnon, W. A.
Mahon, Visct.
Maitland, T.
Masterman, J.
Melgund, Visct.
Miles, W.
Mulgrave, Earl of
Mullings, J. R.
Neeld, J.
Neeld, J.
Newdegate, C. N.
Newport, Visct.
Noel. hon. G. J.
O'Connell, M. J.
O'Connor, F.
Oswald, A.
Palmerston, Visct.
Patten, J. W.
Reid, Col.
Rendlesham, Lord
Rice, E. R.
Rich, H.
Robinson, G. R.
Rufford, F.
Russell, Lord J.
Russell, F. C. H.
Rutherfurd, A.
Sandars, G.
Seaham, Visct.
Seymer, H. K.
Shelburne, Earl of
Sibthorp, Col.
Slaney, R. A.
Smith, M. T.
Smyth, J. G.
Somerset, Capt.
Sotheron, T. H. S.
Spooner, R.
Stanley, E.
Stuart, J.
Sturt, H. G.
Tenison, E. K.
Thompson, Ald.
Thornhill, G.
Tollemache, hon. J. F.
Townshend, Capt.
Trollope, Sir J.
Urquhart, D.
Verner, Sir. W.
Vyse, R. H. R. H.
Waddington, D.
Walsh, Sir J. B.
Watkins, Col.
Willoughby, Sir H.
Wilson, J.
Wodehouse, E.
Wynn, Sir W. W.

TELLERS.

Colvile, C. R.
Stafford, A.

List of the Noes.

Abdy, T. N.
Adair, R. A. S.
Aglionby, H. A.
Anderson, A.
Armstrong, R. B.
Baines, M. T.
Barkly, H.
Barnard, E. G.
Berkeley, hon. G. F.
Bernal, R.
Birch, Sir T. B.
Blackstone, W. S.
Blake, M. J.
Bowring, Dr.
Brotherton, J.
Brown, W.
Bunbury, E. H.
Busfeild, W.
Buxton, Sir E. N.
Callaghan, D.
Charteris, hon. F.
Clay, J.
Clay, Sir W.
Clements, hon. C. F.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.
Clifford, H. M.
Cobden, R.
Cockburn, A. J. E.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Crawford, W. S.
Davie, Sir H. R. F.
Devereux, J. T.
D'Eyncourt, rt. hn. C. T.
Divett, E.
Duncan, G.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Duncuft, J.
Dundas, Adm.
Egerton, W. T.
Ellice, E.
Elliot, hon. J. E.
Estcourt, J. B. B.
Evans, Sir De L.
Evans, J.
Evans, W.
Ewart, W.
Fagan, W.
Fellowes, E.

Fergus J.
Ferguson, Col.
Foley, J. H. H.
Fortescue, hon. J. W.
Fox, W. J.
Frewen, C. H.
Gaskell, J. M.
Gibson, rt. hon. T. M.
Gladstone, rt. hon. W. E.
Glyn, G. C.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Grattan, H.
Greenall, G.
Grenfell, C. P.
Guest, Sir J.
Gwyn, H.
Hallyburton, Lord J. F.
Hastie, A.
Hastie, A.
Hayter, W. G.
Heald, J.
Heneage, E.
Henry, A.
Herbert, rt. hon. S.
Heywood, J.
Hill, Lord M.
Hood, Sir A.
Howard, hon. C. W. G.
Howard, P. H.
Jackson, W.
Keogh, W.
Kershaw, J.
King, hon. P. J. L.
Langston, J. H.
Lemon, Sir C.
Lincoln, Earl of
Lindsay, hon. Col.
Loch. J.
Lushington, C.
Macnaghten, Sir E.
M'Cullagh, W. T.
Magan, W. H.
Mangles, R. D.
Marshall, J. G.
Marshall, W.
Martin, J.
Matheson, Col.
Milner, W. M. E.
Mitchell, T. A.
Moffatt, G.
Molesworth, Sir W.
Monsell, W.
Morgan, H. K. G.
Morris, D.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Muntz, G. F.
Norreys, Lord
Nugent, Sir P.
O'Brien, J.
O'Flaherty, A.
Packe, C. W.
Pattison, J.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Pendarves, E. W. W.
Perfect, R.
Pigott, F.
Pilkington, J.
Plowden, W. H. C.
Powlett, Lord W.
Rawdon, Col.
Ricardo, O.
Richards, R.
Roche, E. B.
Romilly, Sir J.
Salwey, Col.
Scholefield, W.
Sheridan, R. B.
Simeon, J.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Stanton, W. H.
Staunton, Sir G. T.
Strickland, Sir G.
Stuart, Lord D.
Sullivan, M.
Sutton, J. H. M.
Talbot, J. H.
Talfourd, Serj.
Tancred, H. W.
Thicknesse, R. A.
Thompson, Col.
Thornely, T.
Trelawny, J. S.
Turner, E.
Tynte, Col.
Villiers, hon. C.
Vivian, J. H.
Wawn, J. T.
Westhead, J. P.
Whitmore, T. C.
Williams, J.
Williamson, Sir H.
Wood, W. P.
Wrightson, W. B.
Wyvill, M.
Young, Sir J.

TELLERS.

Hume, J.
Hanmer, Sir J.

NAVIGATION LAWS—EXPLANATION—ADJOURNED DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day for resuming the Adjourned Debate,

MR. WILSON begged to be permitted to trespass for a few minutes on the attention of the House while he offered an observation in reference to some remarks which he had the honour of making on the last night that the subject of the navigation laws was under consideration. He was as jealous as any man could possibly be of the credit and commerce of this country, and he should be very sorry if any act or word of his should be construed so as to give colour to a contrary supposition. It would be in the recollection of the House that in the course of his speech a few evenings since, he read an extract from a letter, dated Rio de Janeiro, the 1st of April, 1848, in which there occurred a statement to the effect, that—

> "British ships, some of them twelve-year vessels, were lying in that port unable to get a charter, such was their character, or that of their captains, for carelessness and bad delivery of their captains."

And that that happened while foreign ships found no difficulty in obtaining employment. He also referred to the fact that the statement to the same effect had been posted, during the same week, in Lloyd's Coffee-house. When he made those statements an hon. Member opposite, the Member for Poole, who was, he believed, chairman of Lloyd's, used the words, "It is altogether untrue." [Mr. ROBINSON: I said it was absolutely untrue.] He was willing to accept the hon. Member's own version; but, after all, there was not much difference between it and the version that had appeared in the public journals. But the point to which he desired to direct attention was this—whether these words of denial referred, as the House generally understood them to do, to the fact that such a document as that to which he had alluded had been posted at Lloyd's, or whether they were designed to refer to the fact that such British vessels were lying unemployed at Rio de Janeiro, was what he did not very clearly comprehend, and he was anxious to give the hon. Member an opportunity of explaining what he really did mean. Since he last had the honour of addressing the House, he had received letters from several gentlemen of high mercantile position in the city of London, some of them members of Lloyd's, in which he was assured that the fact of the notice to which he had alluded having been posted up in the coffee-room of that establishment was a fact which did not admit of dispute, but was notorious to the secretaries, officials, and at least half a dozen of the leading members. In fact, several who themselves had seen the notice and read it, had written to him to corroborate his statement. With respect to the letter from Rio de Janeiro, an extract from which he had read to the House, he begged to say that he had received it from a gentleman of the most undoubted respectability. That gentleman was a stranger to him, and was strongly opposed to his views with respect both to the navigation laws and free trade; but he had written to him to say that so jealous was he of the character of the British commercial marine, that he had felt it to be his duty to make known to the public a fact of so extraordinary a nature as that which was disclosed in the letter. It was thus that the communication had passed into his hands; and since then he had received another letter from the same gentleman, in which he repeated his former statements, and quoted in corroboration of them the assertions of the secretaries and officials of Lloyd's. The original letter from Rio de Janeiro had also been sent to him, containing the statement which he had read to the House; and, on persuing that document, he found that the original words were precisely the same as those which he had cited. The statement which had been posted up at Lloyd's was not quoted from the letter in question, but from another letter altogether, which was addressed to Messrs. J. Robinson and Son, and which, it was worthy of remark, corroborated word for word the letter from Rio de Janeiro, which he had himself submitted to the House. It was right that an opportunity should be afforded to the hon. Member for Poole of explaining whether he had meant to deny the accuracy of the information that had come from Rio de Janeiro, or to impugn the statement that such a document as that to which allusion had been made had been posted up in Lloyd's, and was taken down half an hour afterwards by direction of some of the members.

MR. ROBINSON: It was his intention to address the House on the subject of the navigation laws, and he should prefer, unless the House should desire otherwise, to reserve his explanation until he had an opportunity of speaking on the general question. ["Go on."] Well, then, he had to say that in point of fact, there was very little difference between the hon. Gentleman and himself. There was no difference of opinion at all as to the fact of such a letter or extract as that alluded to having been posted up at Lloyd's; nor could there be any as to the perfect accuracy of the quotation read to the House by the hon. Member. His denial was designed to refer exclusively to the inference which was sought to be deduced from the fact of there being eight first-class vessels at Rio de Janeiro which remained unfreighted, while foreign vessels were obtaining freights. The inference sought to be established, was that the vessels were unfreighted on account of the bad character of the ships and of the masters. That was the inference which he had intended to deny, and he would take leave on a future occasion to explain to the House the reasons why he knew that inference to be erroneous. As for the letter from Rio de Janeiro, not only did he admit it to be genuine, but he knew that it was written by a highly respectable gentleman.

MR. MITCHELL had seen the original letter from Rio de Janeiro, to John Robinson and Son. It was a business letter, and contained this plain statement of facts: that there were at Rio de Janeiro eight British ships, which could not obtain cargoes, not because of any defect in the vessels, but because of the bad character of the English captains as to taking care of their cargoes. A gentleman who had arrived from Rio de Janeiro by the last packet corroborated the statement, and went even so far as to say, that most of the great mercantile houses in Europe had given general directions that English ships should not be chartered (so bad was the character of their captains) if foreign vessels should be procured.

MR. MOFFATT, resuming the adjourned debate, said, he was decidedly of opinion that the repeal of the navigation laws would be beneficial to the country. There could be no doubt but that it would operate as advantageously as the various changes which from time to time during the last twenty years had been introduced into our commercial policy. Those changes were at first regarded with great uneasiness, but the result had proved that they had worked well, and that the tonnage of the British commercial marine, so far from having diminished, had most materially increased by reason of them. He was at a loss to account for the alarm with which the proposition for the repeal of the navigation laws was in some quarters regarded. Any apprehension that our shipping trade would be fatally injured by it, and that the ships of the United States would become formidable rivals to those of England, appeared to be very irrational. The House did not appear to be thoroughly aware of the nature of the competition into which we were called upon to enter, or of England's resources to sustain that competition. The commercial marine of Great Britain was the largest and most powerful in the world, and need not dread any rivalry. Its enormous magnitude could only be appreciated by contrasting it with the commercial marines of other countries. The proportion of foreign tonnage was thus calculated:—1846, France, 604,000; 1838, Austria, 128,000; Norway, 212,000; Sweden, 118,000; Russia (steamers), 45,000; 1846, Prussia, 148,000: Holland, 339,000; total, 1,594,000. To this add, 1846, America, 2,562,000; total, 4,156,000. Great Britain, 3,817,000. Add one-fifth for difference of registration, 750,000; actual tonnage of Great Britain, 4,567,000. The following calculations would also attest the pre-eminence of England. Trade with Rio, 1842: British, 14,382; American, 34,976; Swedish, 12,856; Danish, 13,747; Hamburgh, 8,458; Bremen, 3,053—1844: British, 22,628; American, 53,607; Swedish, 16,992; Danish, 12,463; Hamburgh, 11,267; Bremen, 2,797. In 1844, British tonnage to England and colonies, 13,200; ditto to Austria, Antwerp, Hamburgh, and Bremen, 17,250. In 1844, American tonnage to America, 50,798; all other ports, 2,809; total, 53,607. The measure could not be much longer delayed; and he was of opinion that the sooner it was properly adjusted the better. But while he was an earnest advocate for the measure on principle, he thought it right to observe, that many of the details, as sketched out by the right hon. President of the Board of Trade, required, in his opinion, to be carefully reconsidered. For the retention of the navigation laws he was not anxious, for it was his decided opinion that their good effect ceased as soon as England came into real competition with foreigners. When the rates of freightage were the same in English ships as in foreign, those laws became useless. He should certainly vote for going into Committee; but he wished it to be understood that he reserved to himself the right of pursuing such course, in reference to the details of the question, as might appear to him most judicious.

MR. G. R. ROBINSON said, there never was a measure submitted to the Legislature, involving such serious consequences as the present, and of such momentous importance to the shipping and commercial interests of the country, so feebly supported, or submitted upon such inconclusive grounds, as the proposition of the Government for the alteration of the navigation laws. The right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Labouchere) appeared to lay great stress upon a petition presented by him from the principal bankers and merchants of the city of London in support of the measure. He believed the right hon. Gentleman had stated that it was signed by 272 persons. Now, he had had the curiosity to examine the petition, not having heard of it before, and he could assure the House, that although there were the names of some who were no doubt respectable merchants, there were very few who came under the denomination (and he did not mean in the least to impugn the respectability of the parties who had signed it) of considerable merchants, having a large stake in the trade and commerce of the country. [Mr. LABOUCHERE: There are the Governor and Deputy Governor of the Bank of England.] There were bankers and merchants, a large number of solicitors, and others, who were tradesmen and shopkeepers. If the right hon. Gentleman laid so much stress upon the petition, he asked him what he thought of the petition presented by his right hon. Friend the Member for Stamford, signed by 1,900 and upwards of the principal bankers and traders of the city of London? If the right hon. Gentleman would take the trouble to look at the names subscribed to that petition, he would see that the other petition bore no comparison whatever to it in point of numbers or importance. He ventured to say, that the disproportion between the petition presented by the right hon. Gentleman, and that presented by his right hon. Friend the Member for Stamford, which were signed respectively by 272 on the one hand, and about 2,000 on the other, was probably a fair representation of the proportion of the people of England who supported and opposed the proposition of the Government. The measure was not called for by any consideration either of policy or expediency; and he could not account for the Government persevering or pushing forward such a measure upon any other ground than that, unfortunately for themselves, they had committed themselves to the public upon this question, and it required more moral courage than they possessed to admit that they were in the wrong. The right hon. Gentleman had supported the measure upon another ground—namely, that the people of Jamaica had petitioned for an alteration of these laws, and that the House of Assembly of Canada were also in favour of an alteration. Both these facts were undeniable; he did not, however, believe that a numerical majority of the people of Jamaica or of Canada were in favour of the Government measure. But because the Government had, by its injudicious policy, taken away the protection which those colonies formerly enjoyed, by which they had been brought to the verge of ruin, they were now seeking to indemnify those parties at the expense of the British shipowners. He, however, attached no value to the proposition of the Government, because, while it inflicted deep injury upon the British shipowner, it would not ward off the evils which the colonies endured. It was said, that Prussia had threatened, if England did not make these changes, that we might expect reprisals. He hoped, however, that the country was not yet in such a position that they should legislate for the interests of their commerce and navigation under the menace of Prussia or any other State. Were they reduced to such a position as that? He ventured to say they were not. Nor did Prussia give them any encouragement to act liberally, for she maintained the high duties of the Zollverein against us. But while Prussia was menacing, the United States was said to be offering measures of reciprocity. Having looked for many years past at the measures of the United States, he could not discover anything of a liberal policy in the commercial regulations of that country. Did the right hon. Gentleman believe, that if they passed this measure, it would make any material change in the commercial regulations of the United States with Great Britain? He would give the right hon. Gentleman one fact to show how little reliance could be placed upon calculations of reciprocity. He found it stated in a Washington paper, as soon as it was ascertained that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had informed Mr. Bancroft that it was the intention of this country to give up the navigation laws, that they were delighted to hear that England was disposed to accede to the wishes of the United States, because, in doing so, they had no doubt that the enterprise of their merchants and shipowners would enable them to secure a very large share of the trade with the British colonies. One of the worst features of the Government proposition was, that if it were carried out, nearly the whole of our colonial trade would fall into the hands of the Americans. If that concession was made, he believed it would be utterly impossible to compete with them upon equal terms. From the time of Washington to Polk, the whole efforts of the Americans had been directed to increase and extend their commercial influence, and establish a powerful maritime force; and they now boasted that their commercial marine equalled any other in the world. Now, the House would bear in mind that that was said independently of any change in the navigation laws; and how much more advantageous would their position be if the present measure was passed into law? Was it meant to be said that America had any right to be offended if the British Government did not accede to her wishes? He would recommend the right hon. Gentleman, if he entertained any such idea, to read a passage in a letter of Mr. Canning, addressed to the American Minister, relative to the subject of permitting intercourse on the part of the United States with the British colonies. Mr. Canning, in a despatch to Mr. Gallatin, said that—

> "In the alliances of States, any more than in the friendships of private life, it was not among the duties incumbent on either to submit to unequal compacts; nor had it been held an offence against such duties that a nation, any more than an individual, should decline such uncompensated sacrifices."

He would ask what compensation did they anticipate from the United States? Nothing beyond what they at present enjoyed. He complained of the conduct of the Government, not for bringing forward the present measure, because if they believed it would be beneficial they were justified in doing so; but he complained of the mode and the manner in which they had done it, and the means they had condescended to have recourse to in order to support it. He alluded more particularly to the letters that had been addressed to the British consuls abroad. In consequence of the confident manner in which the right hon. Gentleman had spoken of those letters, as making out a triumphant case against the unfortunate shipmasters and the British commercial marine, he had been induced to read them, and he would tell the right hon. Gentleman that his own witnesses did not bear out his statements. So far from reporting unfavourably of the character and conduct of the British masters and sailors, many of them had given most favourable testimony. He would observe that the British consuls were not in all cases the most competent judges upon such matters: they had been most of them military men, accustomed to a strict standard of discipline, and not disposed to make much allowance for men coming off a six months' cruise, and indulging occasionally in an extra glass of grog. But the Government, it would appear, had directed Mr. Murray to write to those gentlemen to state all cases of complaint and insubordination that had come to their knowledge. Now, he thought the Government was not justified in writing a letter asking such leading testimony. They should have rather stated, that, whereas they were about to bring forward a measure for the repeal of the navigation laws, it was desirable that the consul should report such observations respecting the state of the British commercial marine as had come to his knowledge. On the contrary, the Government directed them to report all the cases that had come under their observation detrimental to the character of the British marine. Was it worthy of the Government to seek to blacken the character of a respectable body of men? Knowing them as he did, he did not hesitate to say that they were as respectable in their sphere as any other body of men in the British empire. The House would, he trusted, excuse him if he read two or three passages from those consuls' reports. In his opinion they were most remarkable and curious, and some of them spoke in very high terms of the masters of the British vessels. He would state the opinions of some of these gentlemen as shortly as possible, because, probably, many hon. Members would not think it worth their while to look into those blue books when a Minister made a declaration that the consuls had reported unfavourably, and might take it for granted that the fact was precisely as he stated it. Mr. Brooker, vice-consul at Cronstadt, stated, that during his experience of fifty-nine years he had met with only two cases of masters of British vessels who were charged with obstructing the custom-house officers in the execution of their duty, and that both of them were acquitted. There were only two cases of seamen who were charged with theft. Now, during that time there had been in the port an average of 500 ships each year, and in the whole period 29,500 sail, with 295,000 sailors; and the vice-consul observed that in so large a number the circumstances he had detailed did not merit a thought, as many more crimes and faults would have been committed by an equal number of landsmen. That was one of the right hon. Gentleman's witnesses. Colonel Whitehead, consul at Archangel, stated that some instances of misconduct had occurred, but they were comparatively rare; and some cases in which gross ignorance, except in the practical knowledge necessary to navigate a ship, was found, which rendered the masters a disgrace to the British marine. He added that within the last few years there had been a marked improvement among the crews of British ships. The native Russian sailors were said to be exceedingly troublesome from their intemperate habits. Colonel Wright, of Riga, stated that the British vessels always obtained a preference at that port; that the crews were steady and well conducted, many of them being members of the Temperance Society. Mr. Jeanes, consul at Odessa, wrote precisely to the same effect. Similar testimony was borne by Mr. Liddell, the consul at Memel, and by Mr. Macgregor, vice-consul at Elsineur, who said consuls were placed on the shady side of the proceedings. [*An attempt was made to count the House out, which proved ineffectual.*] He knew he had no right to claim any indulgence from the House on his own account; but, considering the importance of the subject, he did hope that hon. Members would bear with him while he shortly stated his views on this interesting subject. He would not say any more respecting the consuls; he had said enough to show the House that the consuls' reports were not, generally speaking, unfavourable to British shipmasters. He would now advert for a moment to what had passed at an earlier part of the evening with respect to the hon. Member for Westbury (Mr. Wilson). The statement which that hon. Gentleman had made, was, in point of fact, perfectly correct. The only difference between that hon. Gentleman and himself was, as to the inference to be drawn from the statement respecting the English vessels which were lying in the port of Rio Janeiro on the 1st of April last, and which the hon. Gentleman said were not freighted, on account of the bad character of the masters of the vessels. Now, the Committee of Lloyd's received by every packet a report from their agents, prepared, of course, without any reference to the navigation laws or any other political subject, but purely as a matter of business; and in the report they had received from their agents at Rio, dated the 1st of April, he found a very different explanation of the fact referred to from that given by the hon. Member. The statement of the hon. Gentleman was, that all the foreign vessels then at Rio were getting freights, and that all the British vessels were not freighted, thus leading to the inference that no British vessel could get a cargo. From the letter referred to, however, it appeared that of eighteen loaded vessels there were four of them English, one Hamburgh, one Bremen, seven Danish, two Swedish, two Russian, and one French; and with respect to the eight English vessels in the port, which, in the letter of which he complained, were said to be without cargoes, so far from this being true, it appeared that the reason why they were not loaded or loading was, that the masters refused to accept the low freights which were offered to them, and that they were waiting in the hope that when the foreign vessels were despatched they would get higher rates of freights. This statement had been confirmed by the consignee of one of those vessels, a merchant in London, who had called upon him and told him the fact. He begged to tell the hon. Member for Westbury, therefore, that he had accepted the information he had received too readily, and that he was too credulous, and that before using the information he ought to have taken pains to ascertain not only that it was correct, but that his inference from it was correct also. [Mr. WILSON: It was not my inference.] The right hon. Gentleman, who introduced this discussion, stated that Holland was a country which, without the navigation laws, had at one time possessed a large mercantile marine, and an amount of commerce extraordinary for such a country. That was perfectly true; but what analogy was there between the state of Holland at that time, and the state of England at the present moment? At that time Holland had scarcely any competition compared with what we had at present. Besides, Holland had not a debt of 800,000,000*l.*, nor had she such expensive naval, military, and civil departments to keep up as we had; nor had she, like us, to raise taxes (including local burdens) to the extent of 70,000,000*l.* a year. And therefore, although Holland had been able to maintain a large commercial marine without the navigation laws, that afforded no reason to expect that we should be able to do so also with the heavy competition we had to sustain. Should the Government be able to prevail on Members of that House, many of whom, he knew, had gone so far in free-trade principles, and had committed themselves to such an extent, that it was scarcely possible to expect them to stop short now, to expose British shipowners to competition with foreigners without protection, he could assure them that the effect of throwing open the colonial trade to foreigners, not to say anything as to what was called the long voyage, must be in the course of a few years to displace a large portion of the commercial marine of this country to make room for foreign nations, who hereafter might become our rivals. But of what importance was that? asked some hon. Member, when a naval officer of some standing had stated in his evidence that a commercial marine was of no use to the Navy. After a life spent in intimate connexion with things of this kind, and a very large acquaintance amongst naval men, he could not have believed, until he read Sir James Stirling's evidence, that any naval officer of any standing and experience would have ventured to state such an opinion; and if any Gentleman laid any stress on it, he would recommend him to wait for the report of the House of Lords; for although he could not anticipate what their report would be, he should be greatly mistaken if it did not produce the evidence of greater naval authority to controvert that statement—indeed, it had already been directly contradicted by the statements made on a former evening in the speech of the hon. and gallant Member for Christchurch (Captain Harris). He would like to know from the Lords of the Admiralty whether they were prepared with any other plan for manning the Navy in cases of emergency than the one now in existence, before they exposed our commercial marine to such fearful competition as was now proposed? He had seen Sir James Stirling's plan, which was to keep up so large a peace naval establishment as to render the Navy comparatively independent of the commercial marine. He did not know whether the hon. Member for Montrose was prepared to acquiesce in this substitute; but he very much doubted whether the Government would succeed in passing such a measure in the present state of affairs. Another thing of which he had to complain, was the attempt to connect the British shipowner with the system of impressment. What had the shipowners to do with that except to complain of it as depriving them of their best men, and putting them to an enormous expense in finding substitutes at a much higher rate of wages? The system of impressment was an Admiralty system. He was as much opposed to it as any man could be; he believed it to be an arbitrary and unconstitutional proceeding, only to be justified by extreme necessity, though, so far as he could form a judgment, he did not see how it could be dispensed with in cases of emergency without exposing this country to imminent danger. As a shipowner, however, and on behalf of the shipowners, he assured the Government that he should be much obliged to them if they could hit upon any substitute for impressment. The hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent spoke of the apprenticeship system, and made use of an extraordinary expression. The hon. Member accused the shipowners, in his celebrated *Anatomy of the Navigation Laws*, of training up apprentices for the purpose of being kidnapped by the Admiralty. It was not the merchants who had introduced the apprenticeship system; it had been forced on them by the Government, to their great detriment; and the right hon. Gentleman who proposed to expose the shipping to unrestricted competition, did not propose to remove the peculiar burdens to which it was liable. Therefore it was not free trade which he proposed; it was not fair play. It was absolutely giving a preference to the foreigner over the British shipowner. Was the right hon. Chancellor of the Exchequer prepared to allow our shipbuilders to import timber, free of duty, for the purpose of building ships? It was stated in a petition from Sunderland, that the difference of cost, in timber alone, in a ship of 200 tons, built here, as compared with one built in the north ot Europe, was 250*l*., and there were various other charges incidental to the shipowner of this country from which the foreigner was altogether exempt. The right hon. Gentleman got over this difficulty by offering to allow them to build ships abroad, and then giving them the benefit of a British register; but he believed the British shipowner wished for no such alteration. If any doubt existed as to the difficulty of competing with foreigners, he would refer to one or two points of detail. In 1846 the vessels entering inwards from Sweden were 94, from Norway 27, equalling 2,909 tons; Denmark 63, equalling 6,941 tons; Prussia 442, equalling 63,284 tons; the United States 330, equalling 205,132 tons. The difference between vessels entering inwards from those States from 1824 up to 1846 in favour of foreign as compared with British vessels was no less than 3,980 vessels, equalling 700,607 tons. He had a table showing the great disproportion between the American and our own shipping carrying on the trade between the United States and this country. What would be the case if the navigation laws were repealed? All the great authorities, it had been well observed, were supporters of the navigation laws. His right hon. Friend the Member for Stamford had expressed his respect for the memory of Mr. Huskisson; and certainly no man who had known him, and the powers of his mind, and the vast industry which he brought to every subject connected with these questions, could doubt for a moment that he was by far the ablest statesman who had ever existed in this country in treating such subjects. The right hon. Gentleman opposite had also spoken of Mr. Huskisson with great respect the other evening; but in what way did he show his respect? By taking a course exactly the opposite of that which Mr. Huskisson recommended. Lord Wallace urged that the keeping of the intercolonial and coasting trade to our own shipping was a point which no statesman ought to give up who looked to providing for the defence of the country. If he were to go back to the time of Adam Smith, whom hon. Members opposite were fond of quoting when it suited their purpose, it would be found he expressed no opinions more strongly than those in favour of the navigation laws. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade had, in his speech the other night, complimented the hon. Member for Stoke-upon-Trent (Mr. Ricardo) upon the ability which he displayed in his work, the *Anatomy of the Navigation Laws*—upon the manner in which he had treated the question in that work. Now, he differed altogether in opinion from the right hon. Gentleman, inasmuch as he thought, that, with the exception of the historical part of the work, its contents were a tissue of ribaldry and prejudice; and he would state that the shipowners had a just right to complain of the manner in which they were alluded to in it. The hon. Member for Stoke said the other evening that British shipowners were not in the habit of building first-rate vessels; and, moreover, that they did not employ first-rate and efficient officers and crews to navigate them. Now, doubtless, the hon. Member had heard of Mr. Dunbar, Mr. Wigram, Mr. Green, Mr. Somes, Mr. Smith, and many others, who were the most extensive shipowners in Great Britain, or in the world; and was he prepared to prove that those gentlemen were in the habit of sailing inefficient ships, and of manning them by persons incompetent properly to navigate them? But to return to the hon. Member's work on the subject. He repeated that the shipowners had a right to complain of their treatment in it, because the hon. Member had moved for, and obtained, a Committee to inquire into the subject; and they had, therefore, a right to assume that he would deal with the question impartially and without prejudice. On the contrary—and, as he believed, contrary to the evidence given before the Committee — the hon. Member, speaking of free trade generally, stated, "That a verdict had been pronounced against a long and grown-up system of exclusion of foreign shipping and foreign produce. It was settled that trade, in all its branches and appliances in this country, must be free, and meet, by its own strength, the world in open competition." Now, for his part, he did not, by any means, think that those questions were at all settled; on the contrary, he believed they were in a very unsettled state, and that the agitation consequent upon that state had had the effect of reducing to pauperism a large class of persons who were formerly engaged in the building and navigation of British vessels; and he was further of opinion that if this measure were carried, not only would the shipping interests suffer, but those who were engaged in other branches of commerce would be losers, and hundreds of thousands added to the mass of pauperism which at present existed throughout the kingdom. Let Her Majesty's Government look at the condition of the people throughout the different districts of the country, and he would ask them whether they really were of opinion that this was a period for making such a vast and hazardous experiment as repealing the navigation laws? He would ask them where was the necessity for such a measure? The disadvantages of such a course of proceeding were enormous, and the advantages were not in any way apparent, at least to him. The hon. Member for Stoke-upon-Trent had in his publication upon this question taken most unworthy means to ridicule and abuse the shipowners. That he had no right to do, notwithstanding he might be of opinion that the navigation laws ought to be repealed. He (Mr. Robinson) would not, however, follow the hon. Member into that subject, but he would come to the important question raised by the hon. Member for Westbury (Mr. J. Wilson) as to the effect which the navigation laws had upon the extension of commerce. The hon. Member said that they operated as an impediment to it. Now, he (Mr. Robinson) did not deny that in particular cases they did stand in the way of commerce; but his own conscientious opinion was, that those cases were so few and so insignificant, that, compared with the importance of maintaining the shipping interests of the country, our maritime power, and the trading connected with our mercantile marine, they afforded no grounds whatever for repealing the navigation laws. He was by no means desirous of occupying the time of the House, as he would have other opportunities, he presumed, of making observations upon the question before it; but he begged to say, that he would give every opposition to the proposal of the Government, unless they consented to adopt the suggestion of his right hon. Friend the Member for Stamford (Mr. Herries)—he should, perhaps, say, unless they adopted the more sober, rational, and politic view of his right hon. Friend. The proposition of the Government amounted to nothing more nor less than the repeal of the navigation laws, excepting the coasting trade and the fisheries. He thought that there might be many changes made in favour of liberal commercial policy, provided other countries would follow our example, and give us something in return. But what made him hesitate in agreeing to such changes was, that the further those free-trade principles were pushed, whilst other countries acted upon opposite maxims, in the greater difficulties would we involve ourselves. In his opinion the result of nearly all the changes that had recently been made in our commercial code, proved eminently disadvantageous to the interests of this country. No wonder that discontent had been manifested throughout the realm by the working classes, and that so many Chartist meetings had taken place; and he firmly believed, that if the navigation laws were repealed, that discontent would be aggravated by the distress which would follow it. Looking at the present state of the world, he asked, would it not have been wiser on the part of the Government to have postponed the consideration of this question until the next Session of Parliament? The present period was most inopportune for bringing it forward. At least they might have waited until they had an opportunity of seeing the report of the Committee of the other House upon the subject, which he hoped would throw a different light on it from that in which it was viewed by the Ministry.

MR. MITCHELL begged to be allowed to offer a few observations to the House, in reply to the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken. He had made so many assertions that it was really necessary that he (Mr. Mitchell) should make him some answer. The hon. Gentleman had undertaken to defend the character of the English captains; but as Chairman of Lloyd's, he ought not to have been ignorant of the facts respecting the bad care the captains took of their cargoes. The hon. Gentleman had expressed upon the subject an opinion directly opposite to that held by the whole of the underwriters of Lloyd's. He (Mr. Mitchell) was perfectly convinced the hon. Gentleman could not contradict the assertions which had been made. Two of the underwriters of Lloyd's had given evidence before the Committee of that House last year confirmatory of what he had asserted. As to the hon. Gentleman's denial of the affair at Rio, to which allusion had been made, it was well known that English ships were as well built—that they were, in fact, better built than most other ships, and they could therefore be insured on better terms than any other—but it was equally well known that the cargoes shipped in British vessels could not be insured on as good terms as those shipped in other vessels. The evidence on that point by those two underwriters of Lloyd's was very striking. One of these gentlemen (Mr. Cumming), who was one of the most eminent men in Lloyd's, mentioned a case strikingly in point. There were two vessels, one of which was English, the other American. They were both freighted with sugar, and insured at St. Petersburgh. The sugar on board the English ship was insured at 3 per cent; that on the American at $2\frac{3}{4}$: both vessels arrived at the same time. There was no claim made on the part of the American vessel; but the damage to the cargo of the English ship was so great that it nearly swallowed up the whole of the insurance charges. The information respecting the affair at Rio was communicated from a most respectable house in Rio to a most respectable house in London, by a gentleman who was not in any way connected with a party. But the general order was, not to take insurances on cargoes in English ships upon the same terms as those in foreign vessels, because there was not the same care taken of the cargoes by the captains. As to the British consuls to whom the hon. Gentleman had referred, from how many consuls had letters been received? Why, from nearly every British consul in the world. The hon. Gentleman had only quoted five; and had forgotten the consul at St. Petersburg. The hon. Gentleman should have also recollected that Sir Edward Baines was the individual who had supplied Lord Stanley with the celebrated statistics of the quantity of corn grown at Tamboff. He (Mr. Mitchell) could mention a case in point. He had himself chartered an English vessel with an English captain, from Cronstadt. For several weeks the captain was never seen, being all the time in a state of drunkenness. At last the mate and crew managed to get about two-thirds of a cargo shipped. The captain was got on board and they sailed. He thought he had so far done with him. But no; the ship was stopped again at Elsinore. Ultimately, six months after his time, he came to London. He went to his lawyer and said, "Here is a man who has kept me out of my cargo months beyond the time, and it is not now worth so much as it would have been three or four months ago; what redress can I have?" The lawyer replied, there was only one mode of proceeding—first, to pay freight and all expenses, and then to bring an action against the captain. So that the merchant was left completely at the mercy of the captain, who might not be worth even the costs of an action. Now, Mr. Brooker ought to have had cognisance of that case. But it was hardly necessary to go into any further details to show the effect of those laws. As to Canada, the case was most monstrous. They were shortly to have flour from Canada on precisely the same footing as that from other countries. But what did Mr. Gillespie, who was one of the best authorities upon the subject, say? The average rate of freights in 1842, or 1845—he (Mr. Mitchell) was not sure of the exact year, but it was one of the forties—the rate of freights of flour from Canada to this country was 4*s.* $9\frac{1}{4}$*d.* the barrel. At the same time the freight from New York was only 2*s.* 1*d.* The difference of time occupied on the voyage was, from Canada, on the average, thirty-five days; from New York, twenty-five days. Taking the difference, then, of one-third more for the cost of freightage from Canada, for the greater distance, it ought to be 2*s.* 9*d.* from New York, when it was 4*s.* 9*d.* from Canada, supposing the freightage on the same scale in both places. So that it would be seen that there was a very heavy charge imposed upon the Canadians in their competition with the United States by the operation of the navigation laws. As to the expected reduction in freight, he never grounded his support to the present resolutions on such an expectation. What he looked for was, equalisation of the freightage rates with those of the Continental vessels; and his firm opinion was, that by increasing the liberties of trading, they would increase the general trade of the world. And as that would not increase the quantity of shipping at the same time, the consequence would be rather an advance than a decline in the rates. He had been for a length of time at Riga unable to procure a single British ship in which to send a cargo to England, whilst, at the same time, there were vessels belonging to foreign ports shipping cargoes in abundance. It was absurd to say that such restrictions were useful. They did no good to British shipping. This country was by far the greatest consumer of tea, sugar, coffee, and other articles of foreign produce. Those articles would be brought to the country which offered the best market; and the consequence would be that England would become the depôt of all Europe. Hamburgh had been. But the bulk of those goods would be brought to the English market, in which the greatest quantity was consumed; and should sudden reverses take place, such as hurricanes in the West Indies, or the fly in the cotton crop, the consumers and manufacturers of England would have the advantage of supplying themselves on cheaper terms than any other people, they being nearer to the depôt of those goods. Employment would be given to our docks, our warehouses, and our shipping. And did it not stand to reason that in the case of England being made such a depôt, English ships would be employed, as being nearest to hand, and would always command an advantage in getting employment? Such was the trade they had hitherto kept themselves out of, by not making England the depôt of Europe. He had heard no argument tending to alter his opinion upon any of the subjects which had been touched. But as to the timber duties, he thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to take off the remaining duties on foreign timber. The chief foreign timber coming into this country was fir; and the revenue derived from the duties on it was so small, that it might be safely sacrificed for the sake of admitting foreign oak. But he asserted that ships could be built in our North American colonies of the hard firs, such as larch, cheaper than they could be constructed in the north of Europe; and in the matter of outfit we had altogether the advantage of the Americans. The yarn for making sailcloth was an article of considerable export to Germany from this country. But he would just state what was the cost of fitting out ships here. They were—about 1*l.* per ton. for sailcloth; 1*l.* a ton for cordage and running rigging; 10*s.* a ton for iron work, of course supposing the vessel timber built; and 5*s.* a ton for copper work, not of course including copper sheathing. The entire cost was therefore about 2*l.* 15*s.* per ton; and he invited the hon. Gentleman to go over the world, and find if he could, any place in which a cheaper outfit could be had than that. Then, about the crews. As regarded the captains, they were far better paid in the Baltic than they were in the English service, with the exception of those engaged in the service of China and India. But they could not expect to have good steady sailors if they were to be ruled by a man who was always half sober and half drunk. As regarded the seamen in the Baltic trade, he was prepared to admit that the common seamen of Sweden, Russia, and Prussia, were paid lower wages than seamen in British vessels; but he would take another country: he would take the United States, and he would remind the House that if there were danger of any country displacing them in the carrying trade, it was the United States; and he would ask, were the seamen in American vessels paid less than those in English ships? The very reverse was the fact. He believed that the lowest wages paid to seamen in the United States was 3*l.* a month, whereas here their wages did not exceed 45*s.*, or at most 50*s.* a month; and one of the consequences of this difference was, that the United States ships were manned chiefly by English seamen. And yet the American navy was increasing faster than the English, and their ships also commanded greater freights, in consequence of the greater care that their captains took of their cargoes. But there was another reason to be drawn in favour of the view which he took of this question, from the system of the navigation laws itself. The American navigation laws were entirely based on those of England. The Americans were ready to alter their laws, if this country did so; and he had a right, therefore, to put the matter in this light. But how did those laws affect this country? At present the trade between the two countries was carried on in either British or American vessels. The import trade into this country from America might be carried on in ships of either country; but when they came to consider the return trade, what did they find? Nearly all the cargoes that went out to the United States were assorted cargoes, consisting partly of English manufactured goods, partly of goods brought from Germany, and partly of articles the produce of India. Now none of these cargoes could be taken out in English vessels, and the result was that this country was thrown out of the entire carrying trade to America. Again, there were certain trades which were totally unprotected, and yet these were the very trades that required most protection, according to the arguments of hon. Gentlemen opposite: the trades between Norway and England, for instance. According to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, it was one of those trades in which there was not the least cause to dread the effects of competition, though, at the same time, there could be no doubt but that, as far as that trade was concerned, the English shipowner was placed under peculiar disadvantages. Nearly all the ships engaged in the timber trade between the Baltic and this country were owned by the houses that shipped the wood from Norway and Sweden to England; and as they could, therefore, be always depended upon, they would, even from that reason alone, command a preference over English ships. The English ships engaged in the Baltic trade carried lumber, or wood, or coal, according to whichever description of cargo might be best at the time. Perhaps hon. Gentlemen might know that it was of the greatest importance that the deals should arrive at market in a clean state; but in vessels engaged in this indiscriminate trade it was often impossible to effect this object; and he had himself got large quantities of timber from Russia so dirty as to be absolutely unsaleable. That was another reason why the timber trade was carried on at a disadvantage in English ships. But that was not all. The English shipowners were exposed to this competition with all the additional disadvantages to complain of that had been described to the House. They had, for example, the apprenticeship system, which was, in his opinion, a great grievance, and which was to be continued. [Mr. LABOUCHERE: No!] He meant that the system was to be continued if the navigation laws were to remain; or else what was the meaning of all they heard from hon. Gentlemen opposite about the mercantile navy being a nursery for seamen? He could assure the House, that he had considered this whole subject as fully as he possibly could, and that unless he thought this country could stand the competition of foreign countries with the most perfect ease, or if he believed that the removal of the navigation laws would have the effect of reducing or injuring the commercial navy of England in the slightest degree, strong a free-trader as he was, he should be against the change which he now advocated. But his belief was, that this country had it in her power to stand competition with the whole world, and that anything which removed obstacles to trade must benefit trade generally, and the shipping interests with it.

The MARQUESS of GRANBY said, the hon. Gentleman had, in the beginning of his speech, remarked somewhat severely on the conduct of captains of British ships; but, at the same time, the hon. Member had the candour to say those captains engaged in the long voyages were superior to any captains in the world. [Mr. MITCHELL: Not superior.] Well, equal to any captains in the world. But what did the hon. Member propose to do? He proposed to take out of the hands of the British people the long voyages, and leave us nothing but the coasting and fishing trade. The hon. Member went on to say, that gross injustice had been committed upon Canada; that the freight of flour from Montreal was 4*s.* 9*d.* per barrel, whereas the freight from New York was only 2*s.* 9*d.* He believed the reason of the increased freight was not principally and mainly owing to the navigation laws, but to the difficulty of navigating the River St. Lawrence. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade stated the other evening that the measure he proposed to introduce was no patchwork measure, but an alteration of the great principle of the navigation laws.

The right hon. Gentleman went on to say, that if he thought that by making that alteration he should endanger the mercantile marine, and thereby endanger the naval superiority of the country, he never would have proposed the measure. The other evening he went further, and said, he would have his right hand cut off rather than do so. "But," said the right hon. Gentleman, "I contend that those measures do not endanger the mercantile marine, and therefore do not endanger the naval superiority of this country." But something more was necessary than to contend for that. He could not but think that there was the greatest possible danger to the mercantile marine of this country, and that we should lose our naval superiority if the navigation laws were repealed. The great question was, whether we really could or could not compete with foreign shipowners. And if they could prove to him clearly and indubitably that we could compete with them, then he admitted that the House ought not to resist the prayer of the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down. But allow him (the Marquess of Granby) to ask what was the difference between the cost of a foreign ship and that of an English ship? He thought it had been proved before the Committee which sat upon these laws last Session, that the dearest foreign ships were cheaper than British ships; whereas the cheapest foreign ships could be built at about half the cost of English ships. The main elements in the prices of shipbuilding were, first of all, the wages and the material. The wages of the artisans employed in shipbuilding in foreign countries were in the proportion of three or four to one cheaper than they were in this country. And with regard to the materials, such as oak and fir, they were in the proportion of two to one cheaper than in this country. And then, with regard to the working of the ship, after it was built, the wages were about half what they were in British vessels. On the point of the comparative cost of shipbuilding in the different shipping countries, he would refer to the evidence of Mr. Young, a gentleman who had paid great attention to this subject, and who was himself the owner of a large number of ships. On these grounds, therefore, he thought that that gentleman's evidence was entitled to the careful and impartial consideration of those hon. Gentlemen who advocated the repeal of the navigation laws. Mr. Young stated, that the cost of an English ship of 500 tons was 8,750*l.*; of an American ship, 7,250*l.* (or 17½ per cent less); of a ship built in Holland the cost was 20 per cent less; in France, 22 per cent less; in Denmark and Norway, 31 per cent less; in Sweden and Bremen, 37 per cent; in Russia, 45 per cent; and in Finland, 51 per cent less than in England. He would ask hon. Members, therefore, whether they could say fairly and honestly that it was in the power of a British shipowner (if the statements which he had quoted were correct) to compete with a foreign shipowner? Well, but the advocates of this proposed change in these laws said, "If you will only repeal these navigation laws, you will, by the reduction which that repeal will cause in the price of the materials for shipbuilding, be enabled to compete with the foreigner." Now, what were the main articles necessary to the building of a ship? The only article that entered materially into the cost of shipbuilding was the timber used therein. Mr. Young stated, that the quantity of timber used in the building of a ship of 500 tons cost 380*l.* 18*s.* 4*d.*, Mr. Young stated before the Committee of last Session, that, up to the time when the duties upon timber were altered from 2*l.* 15*s.* to 1*l.*, he was in the habit of paying 5*l.* a ton for foreign timber, and that since the reduction in the duties the price of foreign timber was not materially reduced. He, then, would ask the House, whether it were reasonable to suppose that the small reduction which this proposed change might make in the freight, would make up to the British shipowner for the loss which he must inevitably sustain if the alteration were sanctioned? He did not deny that there might have been peculiar reasons why the price of timber kept up at the old rate? He did not deny that railways might have influenced the price, and kept it up higher than it would have been; but he asked the House whether it ought not to look forward to an increased demand for the future? Were we to be a stationary country? Was that the expectation that they formed of their free-trade measures? If the prices of timber were greater last year and the year before, were we to make a sudden stop, and retrograde? Could they suppose that the same causes which had operated to make timber dear heretofore, would not act for the future? But he thought that the right hon. Gentleman himself entertained some doubts as to the possibility of a British shipowner competing with the foreigner; for he had provided that it shall be in the power of a British shipowner to buy a foreign ship, and to have it registered as an English one. But he asked the right hon. Gentleman whether this was the time, when there were so many of our people, our artisans and mechanics, unemployed, to throw some thousands of the hands that were employed in our dockyards out of employment, and thus add a grievous weight to the distress which already prevailed throughout the country? He would ask whether it would be quite safe to throw so many hands out of employment in our private dockyards, when there was such imminent danger of a general war bursting out over the whole of Europe? He would ask the House to remember the valuable assistance that had been offered to this country by the men employed in our private dockyards during the last wars. He would ask the House to remember that there were no less in one year than fifteen hundred artisans taken from our private dockyards to build ships in Her Majesty's dockyards. But the right hon. Gentleman had said that wages in this country were in reality and in point of fact as cheap as they were in foreign countries; that although there appeared to be a difference between British and foreign wages, as regarded shipbuilding, yet that that difference was merely nominal. He had said that we had attempted to build ships of war at Bombay, but that these ships would not last, and that, therefore, we had given up the building of ships at Bombay. Now, he (the Marquess of Granby) believed that foreign ships were not only infinitely cheaper than our own ships, but that they lasted longer. The instance which the right hon. Gentleman had adduced as a proof that our wages were, in point of fact, on a level with those on the Continent, was a complete refutation of the principle which the right hon. Gentleman had endeavoured to make out. Now, when the great change was proposed to be made with reference to laws which had been improved and consolidated by the experience and wisdom of two centuries, he thought he had a right to ask what were the grounds, what were the urgent necessities, that had induced the Government to come to this extraordinary determination? Had they shown the House any advantages likely to accrue from this change, that had induced them to propose such an extensive alteration? Were there numerous petitions lying upon the table of the House that induced them to suspend their better judgment, and make this sudden and total change in a principle that had existed for 200 years—a principle that had been sanctioned by all our preceding statesmen, and by their greatest political economist. But it mattered not what might be the advantages of these laws to the country generally: if they did but interfere with their newfangled principles of free trade, they cast them aside as a useless impediment. Mr. Huskisson, whom the right hon. Gentleman quoted the other night, might say this or that on this or any other question, without the free-traders paying the slightest attention to his opinions if they differed from the opinions of the free-traders; but should Mr. Huskisson be for them, then they insisted that the authority of Mr. Huskisson was not to be questioned. Now, it so happened that Mr. Huskisson, in speaking of the navigation laws of this country, had stated that they should ever have his warmest support, as he believed that they contributed in a great measure to the prosperity and security of Great Britain. He insisted on that House being told upon what grounds the Government had come to the determination of making this sweeping change in the navigation laws. Had we been threatened with some great calamity if we did not accede to this alteration? He thought that the right hon. Gentleman did not understand those free-trade principles which he had taken up; and he would refer him, therefore, to one of the great authorities that had contributed to effect this change. He alluded to the evidence which had been given by Mr. Porter before the Navigation Laws Committee. In question 7715 Mr. Porter was interrogated as follows:—

> "Therefore, as far as regards the struggle for supremacy in commerce, it is rather to our advantage to enjoy a free trade, while other countries are shutting their ports, so as to impede their own commerce, than that they should also adopt the same principles as we ourselves adopt?"

Mr. Porter answered—

> "I am clearly of that opinion; at the same time, it is also my opinion that this country having always been looked to as a rule and guide in all matters of commerce, we should not be long flourishing, as I think we should under a system of free trade, without other countries being anxious to follow in the same course."

Again, in answer to Mr. Villiers, Mr. Porter said—

> "It would be better that all countries should be wise; but if all are not, I would rather my

country were wise; and certainly I think the advantages of unshackling trade in every respect will be greatest to those who embark in it earliest."

And again—

"Your view of the principle of protection to trade is, that the country which adopts it injures herself?—Yes. If we are in rivalry with any other countries who wish to maintain that principle, looking to no higher motives than self-interest, we are rather benefited than otherwise by their continuance of protection?—Certainly; if I ran a race I should like to see my opponent put weights in his pocket. You consider that when France imposes high duties upon raw materials, or anything that she requires, it is not to be regarded so much as injurious to us as to herself?—More injurious to herself than to any other country."

Why, if that were so, we ought to rejoice that other countries had not imitated our policy, by adopting the free-trade principles. If they were to rely with any confidence upon the evidence of Mr. Porter, it was one of the greatest boons, one of the greatest blessings that could be conferred upon us, that Prussia should never allow a British ship, on any account, to enter her ports. But he (the Marquess of Granby) did not believe that they had that confidence in their free-trade principles which they had some few short years ago. He believed that one of the main grounds on which the right hon. Gentleman had rested his case for a repeal of these laws was, that that repeal would reduce the freight to the benefit of the consumers. Would they then, if they found that Mr. Porter was of opinion that the repeal of the navigation laws would have a contrary effect, would they, in such case, consent to retain those laws? Now, he would read a question asked by the Committee, and the answer given by Mr. Porter:—

"Is it not the fact that freights were extremely low for the three years ending with the year 1842?—It is the fact: partly, I have no doubt, referable to the navigation laws. Is it not the fact that since that period freights have considerably risen, and shipping has been again remunerative to its owners?—No doubt highly remunerative. May that be referred to the navigation laws?—That certainly is not referable to the navigation laws, which have not altered since the period to which you allude."

He did not consider himself bound by the evidence of Mr. Porter; but he thought that those who had advocated the repeal of the navigation laws ought to allow such evidence as that which he had quoted to have great weight with them. Then, in addition to the plea of the reduction of freights, which it was said would follow a repeal of these laws, there was another reason urged why these laws should be repealed; and that was that America did not indeed threaten, but very kindly asked this country to reciprocate with them in this movement of navigation law repeal. Now, really it was all very well for America to show such kindly feelings towards this country; but she no doubt sincerely wished, at the same time, to enjoy the trade that we now had between our colonies, and between India and China, and this country. And, in return for the boon which she anticipated receiving from us by her proposal, what advantages did America offer to us? With regard to the coasting trade, which had formed the subject of some discussion, he would make one or two observations. The advocates of this repeal admitted that that trade was an excellent nursery for the Navy. Now, he would ask whether there were no symptom of that trade already falling off? Captain Stirling, upon whom so much confidence had been placed, stated in his evidence that the railways were already competing with the coasting trade; and that he thought that, in a few years, they might almost destroy it. He also found, in the evidence given before the Commissioners ordered to inquire into the state of the merchant seamen of this country, that Mr. Miller, who shipped goods in the coasting trade, was asked whether a general falling-off had recently happened in the coasting trade? Mr. Miller's answer was in the affirmative. He was asked whether the number of ships had diminished? He replied, "Yes; when the railway from London to Norwich was opened, the ships in the Yarmouth trade were entirely stopped." He was asked to what extent the coasting trade had diminished; and he replied, "One-third." He was asked, "Do you think that the goods that were carried by the ships that no longer ply along the coast are now taken by railway?" His answer was, "Yes." So that it seemed entire destruction awaited our coasting trade, "the nursery of the British Navy." The hon. Member for Westbury, the other evening, stated that he would not consent to an alteration in the navigation laws if he thought that the commercial marine of this country would be paralysed thereby; and, he entered into a long statement, and laid before the House a number of figures, for the purpose of showing that by the reciprocity treaties of Mr. Huskisson this country's commercial marine had not suffered, but was on the increase. Then, the ingenious arguments of the hon. Member came to this, that with the reciprocity treaties of Mr. Huskisson, and with the navigation laws, as they at present stood, the shipping of this country had been in a prosperous state; and not only that the shipping of this country, but that the importations, had increased from every other country. Then he asked the hon. Member, he asked Her Majesty's Government generally, why they proposed to make the change? If this country had maintained itself in so prosperous a state under the present system, why were they to make this dangerous experiment upon the great interests of the country? But he wished to draw the attention of the hon. Member to what he thought the hon. Member would admit to be a great difference between the principle of the two cases as to reciprocity. Mr. Huskisson proposed to confine the trade between each individual country and this country to the shipping of the two countries. But the proposition of Her Majesty's Government was to allow the ships of any country to enter into the entire trade of the whole world with this country. Now, there might be many countries with which we were able to compete; and were those countries to enter into these reciprocity treaties, the result would no doubt be beneficial to this country. But there were also countries with which he did not think that we should be able to compete when we admitted them to the same advantages which we ourselves possessed in regard to the trade between this country and our colonies, and between the United Kingdom and China. That was a totally different and distinct ground. We might be able to keep our heads above the water whatever might be the number of American ships arriving in this country; but it was a very different thing if we allowed American ships to bring teas from China here; that was a very different question, and one in which he believed America would be able not only to compete with us, but to drive us altogether out of our own market. He came now to a part of the question which was of the greatest possible moment; and he would draw the attention of the hon. Member (Mr. Wilson) for one minute to the principle of reciprocity laid down by Mr. Huskisson in 1826. Mr. Huskisson said that the most important principle of the navigation laws was this, to prevent any one foreign country gaining an ascendancy over the trade of this. Was there no injury to be apprehended from the foreign countries which this proposed change would benefit? Did we anticipate no dangers from America? Let him call their attention to the fact that the American tonnage had increased sixty-six per cent from 1816 to 1824, whilst the British had increased only thirty per cent. With regard to the important question, even in a mercantile sense, of keeping the long voyage, the hon. and learned Member for Bolton (Dr. Bowring) alluded, in a very off-hand way, to the arguments of Mr. Aylwin, of Calcutta, who had addressed a letter to Mr. Young upon this subject. Mr. Aylwin said—

> "In order to make myself intelligible, I will take an East Indian article, as rice, which I will reckon, on the average, costs in Calcutta, in English weights and moneys, about 5*l.* 10*s.* per ton; if we then calculate the average homeward rate of freight by a British vessel at 4*l.* 10*s.* per ton, it follows that (exclusive of intermediate charges between Calcutta and England) the British consumer is forced to pay for this article at the rate of 10*l.* per ton. Now, as I before said, it is perfectly competent for the foreigner to send his vessel to Calcutta, purchase his rice at 5*l.* 10*s.* per ton, convey it home at 3*l.* 10*s.* per ton, and so lay it down to his own consumer at 9*l.* per ton; but, for the reason above stated, instead of so doing, we find he prefers rather coming to the depôt of England, selecting and purchasing the exact quantity and quality that suits him, and incurring the heavy and intermediate charges that accrue between this country and the Continent, amounting, in many instances, to no less than 2*l.* per ton; or, in other words, purchasing his rice in England at 12*l.* per ton rather than draw his supplies direct from India at 9*l.* per ton; as therefore our own manufactures and consumers obtain their rice at 10*l.* per ton, they enjoy, by the maintenance of the navigation laws, an advantage over the Continent of no less than 2*l.* per ton, or say 20 per cent."

He was afraid that if this change were adopted, it would remove our depôt from London to Hamburgh; and the evil consesequences of that, the hon. Gentleman who spoke last had clearly and most ably defined. He would, for one moment, refer to the rates of warehousing at five different ports. In London the landing and warehousing of a cargo of tea was 16*s.* 6*d.* per ton, rent 5*s.* 6*d.* At Amsterdam it was only 2*s.* 3*d.*, rent 1*s.* 10*d.* At Rotterdam landing 2*s.* 6*d.*, rent 1*s.* 10*d.* At Hamburgh landing 5*s.* Now, he asked the House whether there was not great danger of the trade between this country and India and China being carried on by foreign ships, and even of the merchants of this country actually being deprived of the advantage of having London as a great depôt for their goods? He thought that no person who had read over the evidence taken before the Lords' Committee, could fail to see that our West Indian colonies did not look to a repeal of the navigation laws as a solution of their difficulties. Our West Indian colonists stated that, in consequence of there being no ships at Brazil, no Spanish ships at Cuba, the rate of freights between Cuba and the Brazils and this country, and between our West Indian colonies and this country, would be reduced; that they would receive no benefit whatever from a repeal of the navigation laws; that, on the contrary, it would be injurious to them; and that under the proposed alteration they would have to depend upon chance vessels from America, instead of a regular supply of English vessels, for the exportation of their goods. They stated emphatically that, instead of being benefited by the change proposed, they should be in a far worse condition than they were at present. The House was willing enough to listen to that memorial from Jamaica, which had been so ably exposed by his right hon. Friend. The free-traders and the Government were disposed to listen to that; they said they were willing to relieve the colonies from that position to which their policy had reduced them; but when these colonies entreated of them to do them justice—not to oblige them to compete with slave-grown sugar whilst they were prevented from using slave labour—when they asked them for a protective duty for their produce, in order to enable them to compete with the foreigner—they cared not for their wishes—they cared not for their entreaties—and it was not until they wanted another pretext for the furtherance of their evil policy that they manifested any anxiety for the West Indian colonies. First of all, they inflicted a heavy blow on the agriculture of this country—then they told the agriculturist that out of justice to him, they would give him cheap sugar and cheap coffee, so that he might reap the advantages of free trade—so that he might "buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market." Well, they carried out this scheme too, and they succeeded in one thing at least—in one thing their success was beyond question or doubt—they ruined the West India colonies. Now they came down to that House with a new scheme. Having sacrificed the West India colonies, the British shipowners were next to be victimised. The British shipowners were to be added to the list. The great free-trade principle of "buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market" was to be ruthlessly and recklessly applied here. Ships were to be bought in the cheapest market, and 70,000 or 80,000 men thrown out of employment. Such was the result, he wished he could say the final result, of their policy. He should like to know whether this were really the last on the list? What was the next interest to be sacrificed, or when would they come to the end of their tether? Would they persevere in this cruel and mistaken course, or would they not rather stop since they seemed determined not to retrace their steps? Would they blindly persevere until they placed the colonies in direct antagonism and hostility to the mother country? He had already detained the House too long; but he would say one word upon the proposal of the Government for abolishing the system of apprenticeship. That was, indeed, a most important question. He believed the system had acted injuriously in some degree to the shipping interest; but that interest was content with the system notwithstanding, if they but only let them alone, and did not injure them by their meddling legislation. There were 10,300 apprentices entered in one year in the merchant service, and he begged the House to remember that, although a reflection had been cast upon the system by some of our seamen having deserted to the American service, the number which so deserted was comparatively small, and that the deserters were, generally speaking, the worst men in the service—men who lost their registry tickets, whilst the best kept theirs. The hon. Member who spoke last said it was impossible that the system of impressment could be continued in this country. There was not a man in that House more desirous than he was to do away with impressment, but he felt that at whatever inconvenience, they ought to maintain their naval superiority. He knew that the Navy must be manned, for the safety, the honour, the greatness, and the defence of this country and of her possessions, as well as for the sake of their mercantile interests. Mr. Locke had the following observations:—

> "Crœsus showed Solon his wealth, and boasted of it; but Solon replied, 'If any other come that has better iron than you, he will be master of all this gold.' Surely at this day, with us of Europe, the vantage strength at sea (which is one of the principal dowries of this kingdom of Great Britain) is great, both because most of the kingdoms are not merely inland, but girt with the sea most

part of their compass, and because the wealth of both Indies seems in great part but an accessory to the command of the seas."

That House out not to fix their vision and direct their legislation entirely upon gold, and the best mode of amassing it. They ought to have a higher and a nobler aim to maintain England's high position in the scale of nations—to deal in an equitable and kindly spirit towards their fellow-subjects—and to consult the dignity as well as the wealth of the country. One word upon the attack which had been made upon the British captains, and also as regarded apprenticeship. He would read to the House the evidence of Mr. Brown:—

> "Is it your your opinion that the character of the English sailor has improved or deteriorated of late years—is he more reckless or less reckless than he was, or have his habits of sobriety increased?—Answer: I think he has improved and does improve in all these respects, and that the apprentice laws have done much towards effecting this improvement."

He had endeavoured to show that the advantages which they expected to result from the repeal of the navigation laws were at least doubtful, and, in the opinion of those best, because practically, acquainted with the subject, likely to prove most injurious; that the benefits which they could reasonably anticipate from the repeal of those laws were in no degree commensurate to the risk which they incurred, and the dangers which threatened them; and that as prudent legislators they ought not, without some strong and urgent necessity, to take such a step. At least (said the noble Lord), wait until you hear all the evidence. Do not be precipitate upon a question involving such mighty interests. Let us hear what the Lords' Committee have to say, and what the witnesses examined before it may depose to. Surely this is only fair—it is but decent. Why prejudge the question, or take it for granted that all the evidence before that Committee, and the report founded upon it, will be entirely in favour of your projected legislation? Again, there is no necessity for your immediate interference—there is no clamour or agitation in the country in favour of the repeal of the present law. On the contrary, Sir, there is a strong feeling in the country that this law ought not to be tampered with—ought not to be altered. It is not the people of England that ask for its alteration—not at all. It is foreign nations who make that request; and you seem more disposed to listen to their request than to hearken to the wishes or consult the interests of your own countrymen. The English people, I repeat, are silent, and do not demand their repeal. I again ask the House not to consent to the repeal of these laws, which have lasted for more than two centuries, and under which the maritime power of England has reached a height never equalled by that of any other nation—whose object, in the words of the preamble of the Act of Charles II., was "to increase the shipping and to encourage the navigation of this country, whereon, under the good Providence and protection of God, the wealth, the safety, and the strength of this empire are so much dependent."

Mr. GIBSON said, that the noble Lord who had just addressed the House, had in the latter part of his speech uttered loud lamentations on account of the great injuries which he seemed to think had been inflicted upon the great industrial interests of the country. The noble Lord said, that nothing could have been more unwise than first to strike a blow against the agricultural interests of England, then to inflict a deep injury upon our colonial system, driving it even to the brink of ruin. He would take the liberty of saying, that there was something more unwise still, namely, having got so far in the policy of free trade, now to remain where they were. Having exposed the colonial and the agricultural interests of this country to unrestricted competition, were they prepared to say that, with respect to shipping, they would now take their stand, and neither go backward nor forward? He presumed that they did not intend to go backward, for he had heard no proposition from any quarter which indicated such an intention. As they were not recommended to go backward, and as they could not stand still, he entreated them not to be deterred from pursuing a consistent course by any mistaken views of self-interest. He had often heard it stated by those who opposed unrestricted commerce that they did not object to free trade in the abstract—that they did not object to free trade if it were to be carried out in all things; but their cry was, "Don't make agriculture the sole object of your experimental policy." He did not then see the hon. Member for Essex in his place; but he felt confident he had often heard that hon. Baronet say—he would not undertake for the exact words, but the idea was this—that he did not object to the removal of restrictions, provided the principle were uniformly and equitably carried out through every branch of British industry. Now, the measure at present before the House would realise that which the hon. Baronet said ought to be the policy of Parliament. The noble Lord who had just sat down, said a great deal upon the subject of competition; but he begged to remind that noble Lord, that if the friends and promoters of free trade talked of the British shipowner entering into competition with foreigners, they did so rather to calm apprehensions and fears, than to form any groundwork for a free-trade policy. If it could be proved to his satisfaction that the mercantile marine of England was decidedly of an inferior character, that freights were higher, and voyages were more hazardous, that would only make him more urgent with the House to relieve foreign vessels from the imposts under which they suffered. Did any one mean to say, that if our vessels were worse than those of our neighbours, that that formed a reason why we should secure to our own shipping, supposing them to be worthless, the sort of monopoly which they at present enjoyed? Suppose our vessels were no better than Chinese junks, should we therefore continue to them all the benefits of an exclusive trade? The worse our vessels were, the greater necessity was there to stimulate their owners to improvement by means of competition, and the more did common justice require that the English manufacturer and the English merchant should be supplied with a cheap mode of transmitting and receiving the objects in which they dealt. He said thus much, lest it should be supposed he was bound to prove that English ships were not inferior to foreign vessels; he was not called on to prove that they were as cheap as foreign ships, but he would do this—he would, for the satisfaction of the hon. Gentleman opposite the Member for Poole, supply him with a little piece of evidence. It would be seen, from the testimony of Mr. C. Graham, who had been examined before the Navigation Committee, of which he (Mr. Gibson) had the honour to be chairman, that in England ships could be built as cheaply as in any part of the north of Europe; besides, as the witness justly observed, regard should not be had exclusively to high or low prices without reference to the quality of the vessels. Mr. Brunton, who was surveyor for Lloyd's at Sunderland— [Mr. ROBINSON: Not Lloyd's, but surveyor of the registry.] —Mr. Brunton was a good authority on the subject, and Mr. Graham stated that Mr. Brunton would undertake to prove that vessels could be built at Sunderland, of Dantzic oak, as well and cheaply as in the north of Europe. A great portion of every vessel was found cheaper in England than elsewhere; for example, iron, copper sheathing, sails, and rigging, were all cheaper in England, and the Americans found it so; for they frequently sent their vessels here only half completed, and in this country had them permanently fitted up. He should not dwell upon this question of competition; it was now universally admitted that matters could not stand as they were—every one was prepared for some alteration; but they were told that in making the change, which all men felt to be unavoidable, they ought not to surrender some great fundamental principle which maintained the superiority of our mercantile marine, and secured our naval supremacy. But where was this to be found? In a certain Act of Parliament —the 8th and 9th of Victoria, cap. 88—that Act was a collection of confused conflicting prohibitions upon imports. Such was the state of the law, that people might export in any ships they thought proper: the navigation law only affected the importing ship. It was true that a merchant might import in foreign vessels provisions which were not to be consumed by the people of England. If his goods were to be bonded, then he was outside the navigation laws—that was the state of the law, and he desired to see it changed. He would tell them frankly and boldly, that if ships came hither from any part of the world laden with produce or goods for the use or consumption of the people of England, he would not drive such vessels away from our ports. He would exclude no ships; but would, on the contrary, give access to the ships of all the world. Were they afraid of increasing their revenue by allowing imported commodities to come in? If not, why exclude foreign ships? Could it be contended, that the exclusion of those ships, bringing produce for the use of British manufacturers, was not an evil to the British population? Could such a policy be justified on any natural grounds? He took it that when the question was presented in such a simple form, a single argument could not be found for the exclusion. A ship presented itself in a port of this country laden with food; but the opponents of the measure now proposed said, that as the food was not grown in the country in which the ship was built, and of which it was a national ship, therefore the food should not be admitted. Nevertheless they showed by suspending the navigation laws last year, when a pressure on account of the want of food was apprehended, that these navigation laws were an evil in themselves. [" No!"] Then why did they, at that period, clamour for the suspension of the navigation laws? Could those laws be very good which required to be suspended at the first pressure? Who was to judge whether the supply of food or raw material was sufficient for the manufacturers here? Were not they the best judges on that point who imported the goods with a view of selling them for a profit? That was a question that could not otherwise be settled, but it must be left to the free operations of trade to decide as to the sufficiency of the supply of food and of raw material; and to say that other parties should judge when they would suspend these laws, was to say that they would risk the infliction of a great injury on the country. He had said that these navigation laws were a collection of confused prohibitions on imports; and he would now further say, that they were not altogether for the purpose of protection to the British shipowner, but there was another object in view. The noble Lord, who quoted Mr. Huskisson, supplied a deficiency in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment to the proposition of the Government, because he gave the whole of what Mr. Huskisson said, together with Mr. Huskisson's description and interpretation of the meaning of the Navigation Act. What the noble Lord supplied was material, because he (Mr. Gibson) thought that the most objectionable part of the Navigation Act, and at the same time the most antiquated and absurd part, was to the effect that foreign countries might carry for themselves, but not for one another. Was there that probability now that some one country would carry for all the rest, and assume a naval supremacy on the seas? If there existed such a probability, which is that country? Was it the United States? If it were the United States, why they gave to the United States, by the present system, great advantages under the navigation laws. They, in fact, protected the United States, in their trade with this country, against competition; for they said that a Bremen ship or a Dutch ship should not compete with an American ship in coming here from the United States. Therefore they actually protected the country which they said was most likely to become a great naval Power, in her trade with England, against the competitions of other countries, and gave her the full control of the direct trade between this country and America. Was not that an inconsistency in reference to the principle which they had laid down? He could not conceive anything more absurd than to dictate to all the countries of the world the terms on which they should build and man their ships in order to trade with this country. He could not conceive anything more absurd than for the English Parliament to nurse up the mercantile marine of every country in the world by declaring that each should use her own ships in trading with this country. But the point to which he wished to call the particular attention of the House was, the practical bearing of the proposal of the Government. That proposal, as respected the United States, amounted to this:—that the English navigation law and the American navigation law should at one and the same time be repealed. If they rejected that proposition, what would they be calling down on themselves in another direction? They would be calling down on themselves the fulfilment of those threatening notices of exclusion received by this country from Prussia; and the example of Prussia would probably be followed by the Hans Towns, the Zollverein, and the whole of the Germanic Confederation. With respect to the shipping interest itself, could they for a moment hesitate between these two proposals—to have free access to the ports of America, or to remain with only a portion of the American trade, and lose also a portion of the Baltic trade which they now possessed? What was the value of the American trade? The imports into the United States amounted, he believed, to 75,000,000 dollars. 36,000,000 dollars of these importations came from the British dominions; the remaining 39,000,000 dollars of imports proceeding from all other parts of the world. Under the navigation laws they could only enjoy about one half of the import trade to the United States; but if they repealed the English navigation law, which would cause the repeal of the American navigation law, they would be able to share in the whole of the import trade with the United States, whereas at present they could only enjoy a portion.. The hon. Member for Bridport had, with great success, called the attention of the House to the injurious effects of the combined influence of the English and American navigation laws on English shipping; and in support of that view he (Mr. Gibson) would quote the evidence of a gentleman who would be admitted to be a disinterested witness, the collector of customs at the port of London, who stated that the effect of the fourth clause of the Navigation Act, combined with the operation of the American navigation law, had been to confine almost the whole of the carrying trade between America and England to American ships. It was all Europe against England in favour of American ships in going to America; and the American ship had always a good opportunity of getting a full freight in coming from America to England, because the produce she brought was the raw produce, cotton and corn. Therefore, under the two laws, the American shipping had a decided advantage over the English shipping. If the House, consequently, rejected the present proposition of the Government, he thought that it would be inflicting a great blow on the English shipping, and depriving that interest of the great advantages now within their reach. With respect to the colonial interests, which it had been contended had been pressed down by the application of free-trade principles, he felt bound, having advocated the application of those principles to the colonies, to give them that freedom for the transmission of their produce which was consistent with the principles of free trade. It had been said that they should lose the colonies, and that the colonies would claim their independence; but would the colonies complain of the removal of restrictions on them? Was it likely that the colonies would think it a grievance to have the power of transmitting their produce to the English market, and to every other market, at the cheapest rate? And why should they not put the exporting merchant in the colonies on as good a footing as the foreign exporting merchant? He would take the case of Canada and the United States. They confined the grower and exporter of Canadian produce to one ship, that being a British ship; but to the American, in the United States, they gave the choice of two ships—his own or a British ship. Thus they confined the Canadian exporter to one solitary ship—they confined him to a monopoly, and deprived him of the advantages of competition. He therefore called upon hon. Gentlemen opposite, who professed so much sympathy and kindness towards their colonial fellow-subjects, to extend to them at least the same privileges, to afford them the benefit of that competition for the reduction of freight, which they were willing to give to foreigners. It was more especially necessary that such privileges should be granted to our colonists now that they were exposed to unrestricted competition with foreign producers in the markets of this country. It was impossible to deny that it was a great injustice to place the growers of corn and the exporting merchants in Canada in a worse position than the growers and exporters of the United States. But he would take another case. The House must recollect that the real source of grievance on the part of our West Indian colonies with regard to the navigation laws was, that those laws, when they were first adopted, partook of the nature of penal statutes; they were imposed not so much to benefit the colonies, or even this country, as to punish certain of our colonies for the political opinions they had maintained. The inhabitants of the colonies felt, and always had felt, that the obligation imposed upon them by England, to transmit their produce to the home market in the mode which England thought fit to prescribe, was—he would not say a badge of slavery, but a great and pressing grievance. Now, suppose a West Indian planter were to go to the United States—to New York, for instance—and found there articles of British manufacture which he was desirous to send to Jamaica, and there happened at the time to be no British ship at New York; the navigation laws would prevent him from employing any foreign ship that might be in the harbour for the purpose of taking British manufactures to a British colony. These laws, therefore, were not only injurious to the colonists, but also to the British manufacturers; and he called upon the House, in justice to the colonists, to free them from these odious restrictions, and to allow them to ship their goods in any bottoms they might think fit. He might be permitted to call the attention of the House to a petition he had to-night presented from the Chamber of Commerce of Manchester, the inhabitants of which town were deeply interested in the prosperity of our manufactures. The petitioners stated that, while they repudiated protection for themselves, and while they considered that the Legislature had wisely adopted the principle of commercial freedom, they must claim to be relieved from the oppression entailed by the navigation laws. They stated that, under the enervating influence of those laws, combined with the monopoly they afforded in several important trades, rates of freight had prevailed in British vessels, which raised the price of raw materials indispensable for our manufactures, and of many foreign articles which were consumed by the people. The petitioners further represented that freight was an essential element in the promotion of commercial and manufacturing operations, and that it ought to be treated in the same way in which the Legislature had already determined to deal with the raw materials employed in manufactures; and they expressed their belief that an immediate and wise modification of the navigation laws would tend to the well-being of the industrial population and of the shipping interest. The views of the petitioners were expressed in such forcible language, that he (Mr. M. Gibson) thought it was unnecessary for him to dwell on this part of the subject. He must remind the House that it had been admitted by hon. Gentlemen on both sides that the navigation laws could not remain as they were. If he understood the worthy Alderman opposite (Mr. Alderman Thompson), that hon. Gentleman was prepared to assent to a very important change in the navigation laws. The hon. Gentleman was prepared to infringe upon those great fundamental principles which the right hon. Member for Stamford (Mr. Herries) was not willing to surrender. He (Mr. M. Gibson) doubted whether it would be practicable to make any modifications or improvements of the existing law without infringing upon those great fundamental principles. Why, one of the great fundamental principles of the navigation laws was, that the produce of Asia, Africa, and America should be altogether inadmissible from European countries. This principle was adopted from the fear that foreign nations might become the carriers of the produce of the world—that Holland, for instance, might carry the produce of Asia, Africa, or America to Europe—and that the employment of English ships might then be confined to carrying that produce across the English Channel. Now, he wished to know whether the hon. Member for Westmoreland (Mr. Alderman Thompson), the right hon. Member for Stamford (Mr. Herries), and the hon. Member for Poole (Mr. G. Robinson), could agree on this point, because, if there was one principle for which the stickler for the old navigation laws was disposed to contend more than for another, it was that the produce of Asia, Africa, and America should be inadmissible into Great Britain from European countries. The right hon. Member for Stamford was for adhering inflexibly to this fundamental principle of the navigation laws, while the worthy Alderman was ready to surrender it. He (Mr. M. Gibson) thought, also, that the worthy Alderman was prepared to surrender our indirect foreign trade. If, then, these hon. Gentlemen were all agreed that important changes must be made in the navigation laws, how could they consistently refuse to go into Committee for the purpose of considering the subject? It was impossible to introduce any of the changes which had been advocated by some of those hon. Gentlemen, until the House resolved itself into Committee. He had been charged by the noble Lord the Member for Lynn (Lord G. Bentinck) with having been in some way instrumental in framing returns, or causing returns to be framed, with a view of misleading the Committee on the Navigation Laws. Now, he must say, that a more unfounded charge, or a more unfounded insinuation, never was made. He was prepared to assert that the returns in question were correct. [Lord G. BENTINCK had not made the charge to which the right hon. Gentleman referred.] He had certainly read the insinuation in the noble Lord's speeches, that returns had been prepared by the Board of Trade, with the intention of biassing the Committee, and inducing them to draw erroneous inferences; and he could only say that a more unfounded statement had never been made in that House. The figures in those returns were perfectly correct, and the object of those returns was to show the increase in trades which had been exposed to competition, compared with the increase in trades which had been entirely protected from competition. The returns distinctly showed that in the trades which were protected from competition the increase had not been so great as it had been in the trades in which competition was permitted. It had been said that the heading of the return was improperly worded; but the words used were in fact the words employed by Mr. Young, when under examination before the Committee. That Gentleman stated that, in consequence of protection having been entirely withdrawn in certain cases by the reciprocity treaties, great injury had been done to the trade of the country, and that in his opinion the repeal of the navigation laws would be attended with ruinous effects; but the table to which he (Mr. M. Gibson) was alluding proved that instead of the relaxation of the navigation laws—or rather the reciprocity treaty system—having produced any such evil effects, the very trades upon which the reciprocity system had operated had increased in a much greater ratio than those in which there had been a close monopoly. He denied that any one who was not totally ignorant of the whole bearing of the navigation laws could be misled by these returns. Now, he wished to ask the House whether they considered that, if they resisted the proposition of the Government, their existing relations with foreign countries would enable them to maintain the navigation laws? If they did, he (Mr. Gibson) did not. His firm belief was, that in consequence of the concessions we had already made, the departures that had taken place from the Navigation Act, and the existing treaties which contained the "favoured nation" clause, we were not in a position to maintain our Navigation Act, or any great portion of it. We had permitted countries to use ports, for the purpose of navigation to this kingdom, which were not situated in those countries, altering geography for the purposes of the navigation laws. We had permitted Austria, for instance, to use Galatz, as if it were in Austria; Hanover to use Memel, and all the ports between the Elbe and the Meuse, as if those ports were in Hanover; and so with Oldenburg, and Mecklenburgh, and all the States of the Zollverein; we had departed materially from our principle of making every country confine itself to carrying its own produce. But what said the countries with which we had the "favoured nation" clause, and to which we had promised to give all the privileges that we gave to any foreign country? Holland said, "You allow Hanover to carry produce from Memel to England; is Memel in Hanover? You allow Hanover to come to the Meuse, and carry Dutch produce from Holland to England. You must allow Holland to carry produce from Memel to England; we are entitled by the 'favoured nation' clause in our treaty to the privileges you grant to other countries." Yet it was actually to prevent Holland from being the carrier from all these countries that the Navigation Act was passed. If we allowed this to Holland, we must allow it to Sweden; and if to Sweden, to Norway and Denmark what would Prussia say? Why, that if we allowed Holland and other countries to go to Memel, and carry Russian produce to England, we must permit Russia to go to Holland and these other countries, and carry their produce to England. The hon. Alderman shrewdly saw this; in fact, all that part of our Navigation Act which related to the indirect foreign trade, and the admissibility of Asiatic, African, and American produce from Europe into this country, was practically gone. Indeed, he (Mr. Gibson) very much doubted whether, if at this moment the United States were to call upon us to fulfil our treaty obligations with them, we could even under the present law prevent American produce from being imported from Europe into this country; for the American treaty said that we should not impose any prohibitions upon the produce of America which we did not impose upon the produce of other countries; and if we allowed European produce to be brought from Europe into England, we must allow American produce also. He believed it was only the idea that we were going to deal with the Navigation Act which had prevented different foreign countries from pressing for the performance of our treaty stipulations with them; and he thought he spoke within bounds when he said that with regard to the Dutch treaty the Dutch claimed years ago to have this carrying trade which our navigation law was enacted to prevent—that we have not denied the justice of the claim—and that, whether we now repealed the navigation law or not, we should be under the necessity of making very considerable concessions to them and other Continental Powers. He thought he had stated reasons to induce the House not to take such a bold course as to say—"We will not stir one single step in the consideration of these navigation laws." It was monstrous, when it was remembered how Parliament had sanctioned the principle of free trade, that we should now be deterred from taking the initiatory step of considering the measure, on the ground that protection was invaded. He must now add one or two remarks upon the argument—which otherwise he should be charged with overlooking—that the navigation law was the support of our national defences, and that the mercantile marine must be protected in order to supply our Navy. Hon. Gentlemen seemed to talk as if every man in the British Navy was a seaman. It was only a very small portion that we were supposed to derive from this protection. He believed that of the whole British Navy, not more than a fourth upon an average were seamen. Sir J. Stirling's proposition was not so very unreasonable; it was, that where so small a portion of the whole force was supposed to be derived from the mercantile marine, or consisted of that peculiar body of men that we could get from the mercantile marine, it would be possible so to constitute our Navy as to render it independent of the mercantile marine. He (Mr. Gibson) could conceive it perfectly possible. Was it meant to be said that there could be no reconstitution of the Navy so as to keep the two services entirely independent? Had we got the least possible number of officers and least possible amount of expenses in our naval department? Were we sure we could not increase the number of able seamen without increasing our expenditure? Could we not diminish the number of officers? Sir J. Stirling said—

> "You have no mode of getting the men from the mercantile marine except by impressment; they will not volunteer."

Hon. Gentlemen opposite said, that the mercantile marine was necessary for the support of our naval power, and yet they said they most strongly objected to impressment; but no one pointed out how the transfer of men from the merchant service to the Navy was to be effected. That was a point that perplexed him (Mr. Gibson) much. He believed we had no mode of getting these men except making them come against their will. At this moment they did not volunteer very freely; and he was quite sure they would not, in case we wanted their services for warfare. But the effect of our attempting to impress them would be to make them fly to America; and the mercantile marine and the naval power would both of them lose their services. It behoved the House to consider well the advice which Sir J. Stirling gave to the Committee upon the subject of manning the Navy—gave after mature consideration. He saw that Parliament were relying upon a broken reed in relying upon the power of impressment and protection to the mercantile marine; and therefore he urged that the naval power should be made totally independent of the merchant service, each relying upon its own resources. Hon. Gentlemen opposite seemed to plume themselves upon being the friends of the shipowner and the sailor; but could the human mind conceive anything more cruel, more tyrannical, to the shipowner than the policy they advocated? Did they not, in fact, say in so many words, "We invite you into costly voyages and expensive fittings on the faith of giving you protection—we induce you to give high wages—but we claim the right, when a war shall break out, to pounce upon you, to take your seamen from you, and thereby to subject you to great embarrassment and certain loss?" Was it possible for the human mind to conceive a more clumsy plan for manning the Navy, or one more tyrannical to British seamen, and more destructive to the real interests of British shipping? Upon this point he begged to be allowed to read a short extract from the evidence of Sir James Stirling, a gentleman of great experience in naval affairs. Sir J. Stirling was of opinion that the Navy should be constituted so as to render it entirely independent of the merchant service, and he proceeds to say—

> "I would, therefore, begin a reconstitution of the Navy with fixing the peace establishment; and the consequence of that would be, that a large part—in fact, the whole force—would be trained men and able seamen, instead of being, as they are now, for the most part inexperienced in arms and in the art of seamanship; and having that basis of trained and organised men, the force might be expanded to a very great amount by the addition of landsmen and marines, without having occasion to resort to the merchant service for a single seaman even in the event of a war. It would be a great point to render the two services independent of each other; so that if a war should take place, the trade of the country might not be interrupted by taking the seamen employed in the merchant service for the use of the Navy."

Mr. M'Culloch, who was sometimes quoted by hon. Gentlemen opposite, said, in the article on impressment, in his edition of Adam Smith's works, that an arrangement might be made for manning the Navy, independent of impressment, which, in the long run, would be safer and cheaper than the present system. The seamen of the country were not well treated. The policy advocated by Gentlemen opposite was not successful in preventing the shipowners and the seamen whom they employed from suffering great distress from time to time. Nor had those who professed extreme sympathy with the seamen ever taken any measures to improve their condition. Let a sailor fall into poverty and decay, after being worn out in the service, and he got nothing more than a pauper's allowance. It was not his intention to say a word in disparagement of the shipowners, or captains, or mates. It was unnecessary for his argument that he should do so. It was only natural that the shipowners should view with feelings of suspicion a measure which they believed to be injurious to their private interests; but he was not on that account to be deterred from discussing the question with a view to the general interests of the British empire. He was sorry to hear the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) ask where was the clamour, where the petitions, in favour of the measure proposed by the Government? Was the British Parliament never to carry any measure except under the influence of clamour? It would be a subject of the deepest regret to every true friend of his country, if Parliament could never apply itself to a question unless it were backed by clamorous pressure and threatening from without. The present question stood on better ground, because it was not backed by clamour. It was a question to be decided by dispassionate consideration, not by clamour. When hon. Gentlemen opposite laid such stress upon glory, power, and supremacy, they did not exactly follow the spirit of the times. The spirit of the times was commerce. The spirit of the times was industry, internal improvement, mechanical invention, and political economy. It was not war. It was peaceful relations, peaceful progress, and amicable feeling among all the nations of the world. If we wished to act in accordance with the spirit of the time, we must let the nations of the world bring produce to our shores from every climate. That would be a course beneficial to industry, to manufactures, to shipping, to all classes of this great country; whilst, at the same time, it would be the means of strengthening peaceful relations with foreign Powers, and, as an example of just, generous, and enlightened policy, it would raise the character of England among all the nations of the world.

Mr. HENLEY said, that the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had observed that this was a question which ought to be decided on great and general principles, and with reference to the general interests of this vast empire. He altogether agreed with the right hon. Gentleman in that principle, though he very likely should differ from the right hon. Gentleman as to what he considered to be the general interests of the empire. The right hon. Gentleman had separated himself very lately from Her Majesty's Government; and he thought he would not have ventured, as a Member of a Government, to have separated the commercial marine from the Navy of this country. He had never himself heard any Member of a Government take that ground. The right hon. Gentleman, however, had endeavoured to tell that House, that, in these days, commerce, and the pursuits of peace, were to regulate us; but if he could gather anything from the right hon. Gentleman's speech, it was, that there was another thing which he wished should regulate us, namely, the sordid spirit of gain. In the early part of his speech the right hon. Gentleman said that the "pocket" was the thing he looked to. But the noble Lord below him (Lord Granby) had told the right hon. Gentleman very justly, that he had sacrificed the internal trade of the country, that he had sacrificed the colonial interest, and that he was now about to contribute to the sacrifice of the shipping interest; and the noble Lord then inquired what he would do next? The right hon. Gentleman had told them that he was ready to sacrifice the honour of the country to gain—that everything was to be made subservient to gain—and that, if half a farthing more per pound could be obtained, every consideration of honour and of national security was to be given up. They might clothe these sentiments in fine language if they would; but they could not get rid of the fact that, in every single step they took, they cared not whether they starved one part of the community or the other, so long as one particular class got some particular gain. They well knew that that was the fact, though they pretended to clothe, as he had already stated, this sordid spirit in these fine flowing words. The right hon. Gentleman had referred to a petition he had presented from the Chamber of Commerce at Manchester, some parts of which appeared so extraordinary that he confessed he (Mr. Henley) could not understand them. The right hon. Gentleman said something about the enervating influence of the navigation laws depressing the raw material. But how could that be? How the enervating influence of navigation laws could depress raw material to the injury of the consumer, he could not understand. It meant, he supposed, lowering of the price; but how that could be injurious to the right hon. Gentleman's constituents he was at a loss to discover.

The right hon. Gentleman had also told them—unless he had misunderstood the right hon. Gentleman—that he could not comprehend anything so injurious as those laws both to our commercial and to our naval marine. But if they were to judge from the number of years—from the centuries—these laws had been in existence and operation, he did not think that the facts bore out the statement of the right hon. Gentleman, for our commercial marine had advanced in an extraordinary degree, and had progressed without any check; and whenever we had required seamen for our naval force, we had never been without a supply to man our ships, and to fight our battles; and when the right hon. Gentleman said that these laws had been injurious to either our commerce or our Navy, he could not understand what the right hon. Gentleman meant. The right hon. Gentleman had told them that this measure ought to be passed because there was no clamour for it, and that there was a great clamour in favour of the shipowners and in favour of the seamen; but if there was one interest in the country—considering its extent and its vast consequence to the nation—if there was one interest which was now, and which had at all times been, weakly represented in that House, it was the shipping interest. That interest was, in some respects, a part of our commercial interest, no doubt; but it had never been a clamorous body—and that was a reason why the House should dispassionately consider this question. He was not, for his own part, disposed to rest his arguments on the ground of competition. That was a matter in regard to which they might go into large statements on both sides: it was, after all, purely a matter of opinion; it was impossible to tell what would be the effects of competition, and it was not the whole question. Let them look at the situation of England: she had vast possessions all over the world, and enjoyed great advantages from them that belonged to no other nation; and it was of more consequence to her than to any other nation, not only that she should be on equal terms with all other countries, but should have a supremacy on the seas; and if the naval supremacy of England was to decay, or our naval power to be equalled by the rest of the world, the strength of the British empire would from that moment be gone. The force of this empire was composed of a vast number of parts, not in this island alone, but in other portions of the globe. The English themselves were an industrious and busy people, possessed of more energy than any other nation on the earth, except the Americans; but if they were to retain the advantages of their extended empire—which was knitted together by the ocean, as it were, in one great mighty nation—an empire more valuable even than if it lay in one mass, because they could command the produce of every part of the world—they could not secure it unless they secured the supremacy of the seas. They were asked to be content to compete with others; but competition might not do all that they wanted. And what risk was incurred if their calculations should turn out to be unfounded? What would be their position in that case? Mr. Huskisson was right in his restriction when he said, speaking on this subject, that he would not run the risk of giving to any other energetic nation the trade of the whole world. He was willing to give them as much as they could get within their own limits; but if England helped to give away the trade of all nations, she ran the risk of creating a mighty rival in case of war. That was a risk they ought not to run. The right hon. Gentleman had taunted those on his (Mr. Henley's) side of the House with refusing to consider this question. They did not refuse to consider the question; but what they did refuse was, to consider a proposition, not of any moderate character, but which was at once to sweep away the whole system of their navigation laws. The right hon. Gentleman had said that all parties admitted there must be some change in that system; but he must be permitted to say that he had never admitted anything of the kind, nor heard before of any such admission. The right hon. Gentleman, indeed, took the most extraordinary views in connexion with some parts of this case he had ever heard of. One of the right hon. Gentleman's arguments was, they had got rid of a certain portion of protection, and therefore they must get rid of every other, and become fused, as it were, into one nation with the whole world. The right hon. Gentleman, to be consistent in his advocacy of free trade, should not advocate it in regard to one thing only, but in regard to all. Had the constituents of the right hon. Gentleman no protection? Why did he not propose to begin by removing all protection from his own constituents, if he were really sincere? Was it not singular that when the right hon. Gentleman was in office he did not move to take away protection from Manchester cotton? There was certainly, or he was misinformed, a protection of 10 per cent on some of the finer fabrics of Manchester. He had not heard one single argument brought which could justify the House in running what he conceived was so great a risk. The bulk of the statements given in evidence before the Committee were intended to make out a case. One opinion was evidently influenced by an affection for the sugar trade, and another opinion by a like bearing to another trade. One gentleman was aggrieved because he could not turn himself into a land pirate. His partner had bought a French wreck a bargain, and he was injured because he was not allowed to turn it into a British ship. This was by no means an uncommon sample of the evidence. There was another branch of the subject with respect to which he must detain the House a short time, because he felt that a great injustice had been done to a deserving class of men. He should not have thought it necessary to have dwelt for a moment upon this subject, had it not been for the mode in which the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. M. Gibson) and the Secretary of the Board of Control (Mr. Wilson) being officers of the Government, had taken up the statements made in a blue book, and fathered them, and given them the weight of official authority —statements which he would presently prove were as slanderous as any ever made. They were got up in the true Chadwick style. He would not rest quiet for a moment, when he saw the officers of the Government employing their officials in a manner so unjustifiable, to get up a case against a body of men behind their backs, and drawing conclusions from it which were contrary to the facts, and not even tenable on the evidence they had suborned, until he had exposed so base an attempt to injure a large and deserving class of men. These were strong statements, and he hoped the House would give him their attention while he showed upon what grounds he came to this conclusion. The House would, perhaps, surmise that he was alluding to the information derived from various consuls in reply to circular letters from Mr. Murray. The first letter was, to say the least of it, a singular one, if this gentleman wanted true information. What was the fact? A paid servant of the British Crown writes to a few—he did not write to all, but made a selection of seventy out of 215—of the British consuls, and these he addressed in the following extraordinary letter, which was dated July 1, 1843. He begged the House to recollect that he was not the party to originate this charge against the Gentlemen on the Ministerial bench, as he had distinctly stated that he should not have noticed it had not the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Gibson) and the Secretary to the Board of Control (Mr. Wilson) taken up the statements and chosen to father what otherwise only stood upon the worthless authority of a blue book. The fact was also worthy of notice, as an essential part of the system, furnishing arguments by which it was sought to run down British shipping, showing a foregone conclusion for a purpose which was but too obvious, as there had been hardly a speech made on the other side of the House which did not dilate upon the incompetency of the captains and crews of British ships. Mr. James Murray thus writes:—

> "Foreign Office, July 1, 1843.—I am anxious to obtain any information which your long experience may enable you to supply me with respecting the character and conduct of British shipowners and seamen"—

(some of these gentlemen of "long experience" having been two or three years in their situations)—

> "I am particularly desirous of gaining information in regard to instances which have come under your observation of the incompetency of British shipmasters"—

(that was pretty strongly a fishing question)—

> "to manage their vessels and their crews, whether arising from deficiency of knowledge of practical navigation and seamanship, or from moral character, particularly want of sobriety; also to the different conduct of crews, according as they are commanded by good or incompetent masters—showing, therefore, the advantage, as regards preserving the character of British seamen, of their being commanded by a class of persons who should combine, with skill in their profession, a knowledge of the means of properly maintaining authority on board their ships."

And then he went on to state his object:—

> "My object is to show the necessity for authoritative steps, on the part of Her Majesty's Government, to remedy what appears to be an evil detrimental to, and seriously affecting the character of, our commercial marine; and, therefore, advantageous to foreign rivals, whose merchant vessels are said to be extremely well manned and navigated."

This letter, be it remembered, was from a gentleman high in the Foreign Office; and they all knew what an effect a communication from the Foreign Office was likely to have upon consuls. They might form a pretty good guess of the sort of answers received. Without imputing want of sincerity to these gentlemen, they would inevitably address themselves to supply that which the letter left little doubt was wanted. He would, however, venture to say that this evidence was so full of contradictions made by the same men, and contradictions as to the same facts by different consuls, that it was not evidence upon which anybody would hang a dog. He did not hesitate to say that if that evidence were submitted in support of a case in a court of law, the counsel would decline to go to the jury, as no verdict could be given on statements so contradictory. The first evidence to which he would draw attention was that of Mr. Booker, Vice-Consul at Cronstadt, inclosed by Sir E. Baines, the Consul at St. Petersburgh. The effect of that evidence, given from fifty-nine years' experience, averaging 500 ships a year, was highly favourable to the east country captains, as they were called—captains from Hull and the eastern ports—all of the collier class, the class of men they were taken from. Then they next had Consul Crowe, of Hammerfest (Norway), and Consul Baker, of Riga, and they spoke very disparagingly of the same class of captains which Consul Booker had praised so highly. There was no mistaking Consul Crowe's language, he spoke out in good plain English. He said of the very same men who had been so well spoken of at St. Petersburg—

> "The observations I now make are solely with respect to this class (that is, the Newcastle, Sunderland, and London colliers), and taking them as a whole, I do not hesitate to say they are the most ignorant, illiterate, and brutal set to be met with in command of vessels belonging to a civilised nation."

That was pretty well, he thought, for a man to write respecting his own countrymen. Consul Baker, of Riga, said pretty much the same thing; but he took, besides, the most extraordinary course he (Mr. Henley) had ever heard of. The House would have observed that, in the course of the debate, every hon. Member who had addressed the House had spoken in high terms of the "long trade" captains. The House must be aware of the distinction that existed between these and the "collier class" referred to. Mr. Baker certainly was a most extraordinary witness. He, being Co sul at Riga, says—"I have had occasion to remark the conduct of more than one hundred shipmasters;" and proceeds to speak disparagingly of them generally, though in a less distinct way than Consul Crowe. But feeling that what he is able to say may not fully come up to the expectations indicated in his letter of instructions, he adds—

> "I beg to enclose you a most interesting document, with respect to the character and conduct of British shipmasters, in which I fully concur."

And where did the House suppose it was from? Why, the Bombay Chamber of Commerce. This was the disingenuous way in which a case was got up against these men behind their backs. The witness did not say "I know," but that there was somebody else who did; and, sending a bad general account, encloses a more particular one from Bombay, he himself being questioned as to Riga. What was such witness's testimony worth he should like to know. The Bombay Chamber of Commerce spoke ill of the long-trade captains—the men praised by all the hon. Members opposite; and Consul Baker, wishing to run down his countrymen at Riga, adopts the opinions of other parties with respect to a different class. What could Consul Baker know of the Bombay trade captains? and yet he says, "I fully concur" in their condemnation. But the case did not rest there: there were multitudes of such instances, though he must now be satisfied with having turned the attention of the House to them. There was, however, one other case so remarkable, that he must mention it. After Mr. Murray received his first batch of letters and put them together, he received second communications from some of these gentlemen. ["Divide!"] The character had been assailed of a class of men to whom the country owed a debt of gratitude, and while he had life or breath he would never hear them assailed without standing up for them. Mr. Cumberbatch, Consul at Constantinople, wrote his first letter on the 30th of September, 1843. He complains of the disorderly conduct of the Sunderland and Newcastle captains; but he says—

> "Vessels arriving from London and Liverpool are generally better navigated. The masters and men are of a superior class, and disorderly conduct is much less frequent on board those vessels than the others."

That was a decided statement of facts. But Consul Cumberbatch sends a subsequent letter, dated November 3, 1847, and what did he say then? Why, he then wrote—

> "That vessels belonging to the outports are better commanded and manned than those belonging to the larger ports, as there the owners have better opportunities of examining the characters of the masters and crews they employ."

In the former letter London and Liverpool ships were better than those from the outports. Here, then, was a Government official contradicting himself on a matter of fact. What confidence, then, could be placed in such evidence to take away the characters of men behind their backs? But the Consul went on to say, that—

> "Ships insured in clubs were commanded by men of more respectability, because mutual insurance makes them more careful as to what masters they employ."

The ships insured in clubs are those of Newcastle, and not of London and the larger ports, and the Consul thus gave a reason to show why he could not have been speaking the truth. A good deal had been said about ships at Rio Janeiro not being properly loaded; but there was evidence to prove the bad condition in which English ships delivered their cargoes, caused by the practice of that port with regard to the stowage, which was taken out of the hands of the master, and placed in that of an intermediate agent who had a beneficial interest in it. As a specimen of the peculiar kind of information given by some of these consuls, he might mention that a gentleman at Palermo, of the name of Goodwin, wishing, no doubt, to magnify the foreign marine at the expense of the British marine, stated, that the Sicilian mariners were so good that when such a thing occurred as that a Sicilian found his way to India and back again, he was immediately made an officer of the Royal Navy. Full as this book was of slanderous statements, there was not one man whose evidence it contained that had not admitted the superiority of British seamen so far as seamanship was concerned. The Consul at St. Michael's acknowledged that—

> "The consuls only see the men when they are on shore, and there are many men who may indulge and break out on shore when off duty, but who may be good men at sea."

With these men, whom he had set down as intemperate, not a single vessel had been lost, though several had been so with the other class. Of the seventy-one gentlemen who gave evidence, no two agreed; yet upon the testimony of those persons the seamen of Great Britain were to be aspersed. He repeated that the evidence was of such a nature, that he, for one, would not hang a dog upon it. It was got up by leading questions proposed by the authorities to whom those gentlemen looked for promotion. He did not hesitate to state that a valuable class of men had been slandered behind their backs for the purpose of getting up a case to repeal the navigation laws. He cautioned the House how it lightly interfered with the existing law. No case had been made out for an alteration. The British commercial marine had increased quite in proportion with the demands for commerce. The present measure was adverse to the interests of the mercantile marine; and if that suffered, the nation at large would be subjected to irreparable injury. Let them remember that when once concessions were made, there was no retracing their policy. Let them remember that they were not taking a progressive step, but that they were about to take the whole step at once. He felt that the interests of the country, not merely the interest of the monied and trading classes, but that the honour, the greatness, the independence of the country, and everything they held dear and wished to retain inviolate, could only be secured by keeping up their naval supremacy. Lose that and they would no longer be mistress of the seas—the glory and greatness of the country would have passed away.

Debate again adjourned.

House adjourned at a quarter past One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, June 2, 1848.

MINUTES.] *Took the Oaths.*—Several Lords.

PUBLIC BILLS.—1ª Sale of Beer Regulations; Copyhold Enfranchisement Extension; Tobago, Relief and Immigration into British Guiana and Trinidad.

3ª and passed; Poorhouses (Ireland); Parliamentary Proceedings Adjournment; Smoke Prohibition.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From several Lodges of Odd Fellows and Foresters, for an Extension of the Privileges of the Benefit Societies Act to them.—From several Charitable Institutions, in the County of Huntingdon, to be Relieved from the Payment of Legacy Duty upon Bequests made to them.—From the Synod of Moray, against the Jews' Disabilities Bill.—From Huddersfield, for the Adoption of Measures to Amend the Bankruptcy Laws.—From Wemyss, for Facilitating the Attainment of Sites for Churches (Scotland).—From Glasgow, for the Improvement of the present System of Parochial Education (Scotland).—From the County of Ayr, for the Immediate Completion of the Trigonometrical Survey of Scotland.—From the Wesleyan Methodists of Vauxhall Chapel, for the Closing of Public Houses on the Sabbath.—From Forres, Avondale, and Kirkcudbright, against the Marriage (Scotland) Bill, and Registering Births, &c. (Scotland) Bill.

THE LATE DISTURBANCES IN THE METROPOLIS.

Lord BROUGHAM presented a petition, and said, he would take that opportunity of drawing their Lordships' attention to what had recently been going on in the streets and squares of the metropolis. He had been led to the serious consideration of these turbulent demonstrations by the events of the last two days; for it was difficult to conceive anything more intolerable, anything more hurtful in its nature, both to the trade of the peaceful and honest and industrious inhabitants of this metropolis, and also which was a great grievance in itself, although it perhaps could not be counted in pounds, shillings, and pence—anything, in fact, more utterly and entirely vexatious to the peaceable inhabitants of London than those alarms—alarms to which the population was constantly exposed, without the possibility of telling or of knowing to what they might lead—he alluded to the lawless processions which had been recently got up—anything, he repeated, more alarming, more vexatious, and more injurious, in all respects, than these processions, he, for one, could not imagine. Now, he could understand a public meeting—he could comprehend why a meeting should be held, peaceably and not tumultuously, and in such moderate numbers as to permit of fair discussion taking place—all that he could understand. But the practice of meeting in public was a civil right, and required to be regulated as all civil rights required to be regulated, without which they might produce abuse—degenerate, indeed, into abuse—so that the right might absolutely become a wrong. But that persons—not once, or twice, or, as it might be by chance, but regularly and systematically, and at the expense of the industrious and the well-disposed portion of the community—should be minded to introduce a system which now prevailed in Paris, to the scandal not only of all France, but absolutely of all Europe—that some 20,000 or 30,000 men should be minded to devote the whole of their time to processions, to the production of alarms in the minds of the whole community, and not only the whole community, but, as in the case of Paris, in the minds of the whole Government; so that the Government there were absolutely fain to address manifestoes and proclamations to the evil-minded, not requiring or demanding, but humbly imploring them to remain tranquil—requests, by the by, which the rioters did not at all seem disposed to comply with; for there was but little understanding between them and the Government—that people here in London—industrious, rational, sober-minded London—that our English people should be beginning that system of processions, where there could be no discussion, or should be trying to make themselves a species of peripatetic discussers—though, after all, it was idle to talk of discussion in the matter—that such a system should be apparently beginning to be introduced here, was a circumstance which struck him with the utmost degree of surprise and of indignation. But they had gone further than mere impromptu processions. The town had been long ago placarded with bills bearing the words, and nothing but the words, "The 29th of May;" and then, after the lapse of some weeks, without any other notice, their Lordships heard of meetings, of processions—on that very day, let it be observed, of 2,000 men marching from this point, of 3,000 men marching from that, uniting their forces at a certain spot, and then proceeding from the eastern to the western end of the town, where it was not their fault or their leaders' fault that more mischief had not been done than was actually committed. But although there was no actual outbreak, was there no injury inflicted upon the community? Why, all trade had been interrupted. Several traders had come to him on Wednesday last to complain upon the subject. He at first said, "Why, these processions cannot much affect you. They take place at night, when your shops are shut." But they replied, "You don't know the nature of customers; for when there exists any alarm in the community, customers will not come to our shops in the numbers in which they come when everything is quiet." All he had said was, that he was quite confident the law would be vigorously though mildly administered. Then, again, his visitors said, and he agreed with them in saying, "What is the use of these processions? They do harm to us, and good to nobody." Now, he replied, and what he said then he repeated now, "Whatever the object of those who march in processions may be, by marching in processions they will not get it." He repeated, even although the object might be the most commendable possible—even though it might be an object in which he himself was particularly interested—say, for example, the amendment of the law—still that object would not be attained, and it ought not to be attained, if sought in an illegal manner. He wished, then, to show the people—to show those who took part in these illegal demonstrations—to show both the doers of wrong and the sufferers from wrong—that the eyes of Parliament were upon them. He wished it to be known that Parliament was aware how sorely the patience of the troops, of the police, and of the special constables, had been tried. He did not mean to say that proper attention had not been paid by the Government to the evils in question. He believed that proper attention had been paid, and that arrangements had been made for the suppression of an outbreak; not, however, that he had any fear of an outbreak; he did not believe that anything of the kind would be attempted; but what he did fear, what he did know, was, that these constant processions had the effect of interrupting trade—of harassing, to the last degree, the voluntary forces, as well as the police, the troops, and indeed the whole of the tranquil and sober-minded portion of the community, without any one person, in any one quarter, entertaining even the shadow of a belief that these processions could possibly serve for the attainment of any object whatever.

The DUKE of WELLINGTON was glad that his noble and learned Friend had brought this grievance under their Lordships' notice. The whole town had been under arms for the last four nights, since Monday, the troops, the police, and inhabitants of all descriptions being kept in a state of readiness. He trusted that their Lordships would turn their attention to some mode of preventing the recurrence of an evil which had now been felt for about half a dozen of times since the commencement of this Session of Parliament. Two modes of preventing it occurred to him: one mode was to prevent the assembly of these large bodies of persons, too numerous for the civil power on the spot to deal with, and at the same time too numerous for the purpose of discussion, if discussion was the object of their assembling. Another mode of dealing with this evil, was to make the persons who called these meetings together, under any pretext whatsoever, responsible for the evil consequences attending them in the spoliation of property—the destruction of windows or other property. Let such persons be held responsible for the damage in their own pockets. If that were done, their Lordships would find that these gentlemen would not be so ready to call these meetings together for no purpose whatever, excepting to make orations, exciting the people to the assassination of all who might have promoted the punishment of a felon, including the illustrious Lady on the Throne, and all the servants of the Crown and of the public who might have lent their aid to the conviction and punishment of the felon.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE agreed with the noble and learned Lord in thinking that, if large bodies of persons were to continue to walk about in organised processions to procure the amendment of the law, which the noble and learned Lord stated he was desirous of seeing effected, they would be successful at least in this respect, in proving that the law required amendment, at any rate, as regarded their proceedings. Of course, there could not for a moment be a second opinion that processions having a tendency to disturb the public peace ought at once to be dispersed; and, as their Lordships knew, such processions had yesterday and the day before been arrested in their progress, and the public peace preserved; their progress had been effectually resisted, and the purposes of those engaged in them had been signally defeated. At the same time, he was ready to admit that the proceedings of those parties had been attended with a degree of success which ought no longer to be tolerated; but as to the 29th of May, and the placards announcing that date, he must be allowed to remind the House that the original announcements of that kind had no reference whatever to the holding of public meetings in this metropolis; they were issued long before the intended processions, and merely consisted, as he understood, of an invitation to be present at the opening of Cremorne-gardens. He was perfectly ready to admit that, putting the affair of Cremorne-gardens completely out of the question, and setting aside altogether the announcement of the 29th of May, the subject of these processions demanded the serious attention of Her Majesty, and required the advice of Parliament. It was not to be borne that this most industrious metropolis should be exposed to disturbances of such a nature, and that the pains-taking and anxious tradesmen of London should be exposed to a loss of property the amount of which it would be exceedingly difficult to calculate with accuracy, but respecting the magnitude of which there could not be a shadow of doubt.

The DUKE of RICHMOND said, it had been suggested that those persons who called such meetings as occasioned the disturbances to which reference had been made, ought to be held responsible for the results. Now, it was well known that in several of the provincial towns a great deal of disturbance had taken place, and he confessed he saw no reason why the parties with whom those proceedings originated should not be made amenable to the law; they had committed an offence well known to the laws of England, and he thought it would be an extremely judicious course to put that law in force against them. The police had behaved remarkably well; and it was due to that force that every means which the law afforded should be taken for the purpose of insuring their protection in the due discharge of their duty. Upon these grounds, he did not hesitate to say that the wrong-doers in those cases ought to be indicted. For example—in London, if some twenty or thirty of them were sent for trial to the Central Criminal Court, much advantage might be the consequence. He took the liberty, then, of suggesting to his noble Friend opposite, that in the early part of these proceedings it would be highly important that the Queen's Government should show a determination to put them down. He thought it highly important that the attention of his right hon. Friend at the head of the Home Department should be called to this subject. At the same time, he was fully sensible of the great exertions made by his right hon. Friend in maintaining the public tranquillity, and of the ability which he had displayed; but he did believe that some activity shown in the matter of prosecutions and indictments might possibly prevent the necessity of calling out the soldiery. If necessary, they must be called out; and if the disturbers of the public peace assembled with arms in their hands, the soldiers must be called on to act. They had already been too long kept under arms, and if they were frequently called out, and at length obliged to act, it might be no harm to remind those persons who were active in forming processions that soldiers were but men, and that it would be difficult to estimate the consequences of once putting them in motion: under certain circumstances, it might be extremely difficult to restrain them.

LORD DENMAN said, he would not advert to any particular facts, as such matters might come judicially under his notice; but he might inform their Lordships that when the grand jury recently assembled in the Court of Queen's Bench, the learned Judge (Mr. Justice Patteson) who then presided, very properly thought it his duty to lay down the law distinctly upon this subject. Mr. Justice Patteson had stated the dangers which those persons who took any part in these disturbances were incurring; he warned them not to underrate the consequences which any attempt to resist the dispersion of the mobs of which they formed part would bring upon them. He did not himself hesitate to say, that if the statements put forward upon these subjects were not exaggerated, such insufferable insults as the law was now exposed to could no longer be tolerated. Assuming that the speeches at those meetings were reported in the terms that they were delivered, then such speeches, exciting the hearers to felony, might be visited by the severest penalties of the law. In one sentiment dropped by his noble and learned Friend opposite he fully concurred, namely, that if the object which those parties proposed to themselves were of the most laudable character, yet that the mode by which they sought to accomplish those objects being illegal and criminal, the object itself ceased to be justifiable. As an old reformer, he would earnestly dissuade his fellow-countrymen from engaging in those questionable proceedings; to get up petitions and agitate the public mind at a period like the present, would do more injury than service to the cause of reform; and he doubted not that such proceedings would prove as dangerous to the parties agitating as they were inconvenient to the rest of the community. As an old friend and well-wisher, he should earnestly hope that all agitation would be for the present suspended, as otherwise there would be great danger of putting an end to all attempts at constitutional reform, even to the sacrifice of the principles of constitutional freedom.

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH SPAIN.

LORD STANLEY said, that since he last thought it necessary to bring the affairs of Spain under the notice of their Lordships, he had had an opportunity of examining the papers which had been laid before them respecting the circumstances under which the British Minister, Sir Henry Bulwer, quitted Madrid. He was not, however, now about to enter into any discussion of the merits of the question, neither had he any intention of calling upon Her Majesty's Government to state the course which they intended to pursue with regard to those occurrences, under the circumstances in which they were at present placed; but he must say, that in the papers to which he had referred there was a manifest incompleteness. To him it appeared that there were important omissions upon a subject respecting which full information was most material. A most material part of the case appeared to him to have been wholly omitted; he alluded to a statement on the part of the Government of Spain to the Government of this country, setting forth the motives which had induced the former to take so strong a step as that of sending away our Minister from the Court of Madrid. He was sure it would be at once felt that noble Lords opposite ought to take some decided course, and that they ought as soon as convenient to furnish the House with information regarding these transactions. The question which he at present wished to put was this—had Her Majesty's Government received any communication from the Court of Madrid explaining the motives which had impelled them to the remarkable step that they had recently taken, or whether any communication had been made in addition to those made to Sir H. Bulwer respecting the motives of the Spanish Government, and the ground of their proceedings; and, if so, whether it was the intention of the Queen's Government to lay copies of such documents before Parliament?

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE replied, that since the papers to which the noble Lord had referred were laid on the table of the House, other communications had been received by means of the only legitimate channel through which correspondence of that kind could pass, or from which it could be received. He had further to say, that that correspondence, as far as it had gone, would not be considered as affording any satisfactory explanations of the reasons which had influenced the Spanish Government; and therefore, until further communications were received, he could scarcely think it desirable to lay any additional papers on the table of the House. Until further opportunity could be afforded for eliciting the sentiments of the Spanish Government, he did think it inexpedient to carry the production of papers any further for the present. But, the moment those documents were complete, they should, without delay, be laid upon the table of the House in the fullest form. The noble Lord had spoken of certain material omissions from the papers already before their Lordships. Upon that point he had only to observe, that neither he nor any of his noble Friends were at all aware of any such omissions. As the noble Lord had said, he should abstain from entering into any discussion of the general merits of the question. If ever they should become the subject of discussion, he doubted not that it would be fully in his power to satisfy their Lordships, and even the noble Lord opposite, that nothing material had been omitted—at least, nothing that could not be satisfactorily explained.

IRELAND.

The Third Reading of the Parliamentary Proceedings Adjournment Bill having been moved,

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE said, he wished to take that opportunity of calling their Lordships' attention to some papers respecting the state of Ireland. He might, perhaps, have laid them on the table of their Lordships' House without making any comment whatever; but, as repeated inquiries had in that House been made with respect to the state of Ireland, he did think it well, under present circumstances, to say a few words. The first paper which he proposed to lay upon the table of their Lordships' House was one which had been called for a considerable time ago, and which, if he recollected aright, had been called for by a noble Lord whom he then saw on the bench opposite. That paper, he trusted, would enable them to see the amount of loans which had been granted for the relief of the suffering part of the population of Ireland; and it would, he believed, at the same time enable them to see the various objects to which those loans had been applied. The general result of these documents would show that a sum had been advanced to the Irish people amounting to no less than 8,787,000*l.*, which included 339,000*l.*, which had been advanced for the purpose of promoting railways in Ireland. These loans, as doubtless their Lordships were already aware, were repayable at several periods, varying from one to twenty years. It was his duty to lay a statement of those loans before the House; but he did not by any means feel himself called upon to vindicate all those loans: at the same time, he had no objection to say that those loans were originally made at a time when the Government had no alternative. It was true that those loans had not always been applied to the best possible advantage, for want of sufficient organisation. The parties concerned in the administration of those funds were obliged to take their chance for success. The fact was, that they had been obliged to make those advances without requiring surveys or organisation; for if they had required those as preliminary conditions, that would have defeated their design altogether. He knew perfectly well that many of the statements contained in those papers would disappoint their Lordships. The results of attempts to create an artificial demand for labour in Ireland, could not be otherwise than disappointing to those who wished, as every one ought to wish, that attempts should be made to effect a substantial and permanent improvement in the condition of the people of Ireland. The real regenerative principle for that part of the United Kingdom was to be found, not in large grants, but in an awakened spirit of industry amongst the people themselves. But, though strongly influenced by these sentiments, Her Majesty's Government were not for a moment insensible to the claims which the distress in Ireland had created; and he regretted to say that in some parts of Ireland much distress was still to be apprehended, though no doubt two-thirds, or at all events one-half, of Ireland was in the enjoyment of comparative ease. In those parts of the country, however, where the people were dependent upon one article of food, where that failed there could be no doubt the distress was extreme; and he could confidently assure the House that those parts of Ireland had obtained, and should continue to receive, the utmost attention from the responsible advisers of the Crown. The House would see from the papers which were to be laid before them, that from time to time assistance had been given to the people of Ireland in various forms, and that a certain amount of aid had been conveyed to them through the instrumentality of the British Association; and here he must be allowed to say that the manner in which that body carried out their operations did them immortal honour. Their charity and benevolence were greater, he believed, than had ever been previously known in any country; and he believed that upon examination their system would be found more perfect than any other that had ever been adopted for such a purpose. The mode in which it had been thought most expedient to apply that fund, was one which had more than once been noticed in that House, and which he rejoiced to say had been productive of happy results; it was assistance given by feeding and educating children in large masses. At a time not very distant from the present, there were no fewer than 201,000 children thus provided for at an expense of 3,000*l.* a week. He must invite the particular attention of their Lordships to the papers and correspondence of the British Relief Association, as containing valuable testimony of the manner in which the plans adopted by the Government had operated, and of the good that had been effected. [Here the noble Marquess read one or two passages from the papers,] He did not, indeed, believe there was a clergyman or an inspector in any part of Ireland, in which these measures had been taken, who was not prepared to come forward and bear the same testimony. Up to the last two months the sum of 78,000*l.* had been expended in this manner. The Government had also taken measures so as to continue the means of education and relief until after the next harvest. This was a subject which he felt there was some difficulty in dealing with, so as to avoid exciting delusive expectations, and giving rise to importunate demands. He would, however, say, with respect to the advances that had been made, that Her Majesty's Government had come to a resolution, under the present circumstances of Ireland, not to require the payment of any one of the instalments, although many were due, until after the approaching harvest. He could not quit this subject of the British Association without calling the attention of the House, not only to the general spirit of benevolence which had prevailed, and which had been so usefully and discreetly applied to the mitigation of this fearful distress, but to the merits also of one individual whose merits and disinterested exertions deserved the highest praise. He alluded to Count Salitzky, a Polish nobleman resident in this country, to whom, after much deliberation and communication with the Committee, the Government had come to the determination of intrusting the management of the distribution of these funds—a task for which his previous habits, his high character, and his unquestionable benevolence, eminently adapted him. He had also to inform their Lordships that, after discharging the onerous and responsible duties which he had undertaken, Count Salitzky had positively refused to accept the smallest remuneration whatever. The noble Marquess then expressed the gratification he felt in being able to state that, in the parts of the country to which he had been alluding, there was a greater amount of cultivation now going on than had been known in any former year; and he read two letters, one from Mr. Griffith, and another from a gentleman dating from Cork, descriptive of the improved aspect of the country. The noble Marquess concluded by laying upon the table the accounts and papers relating to the distribution of the grants for the relief of the distress in Ireland.

EARL FITZWILLIAM could not participate in the sanguine hopes of improvement which seemed to have been instilled into the mind of his noble Friend by his informants. He fully admitted, however, that no blame could attach to the Government for the course they had originally taken with respect to Ireland. He had never said or thought so. He had never found the slightest fault with the Government for what they had then done; but he must find fault with them if they lulled themselves into the flattering belief that nothing more was necessary for the furtherance of the interests of that country than the measure which Parliament had already passed. He wished to see a change in that country, but he saw nothing in the measures already taken which had a tendency to effect that change. He wanted to see a change in the condition and relative situations between the different classes of society in Ireland; and he saw nothing in what had been done that was calculated to produce such an alteration. Nothing had been done to encourage emigration on a large scale, and he was satisfied that without that, the state of the rural population of Ireland could not be effectually improved. The rural population was the phenomenon which must be dealt with, and, although there was a great amount of industry in the country, he had yet seen no tendency in the measures of the Government to place the rural population on a footing with that of other countries.

Subject at an end.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNMENT BILL.

LORD STANLEY moved that the Bill be now read 3ª.

LORD CAMPBELL in moving, pursuant to notice, that the Bill be read a third time that day six months, said, that he had delayed till the last stage taking so hostile a course, in the hope that the objections he had stated to the Bill would have been made by some alterations. But the measure appeared to be even more objectionable now than when the noble Lord had first introduced it; for the only Amendment which he had proposed would considerably add to the evil. His objection to the Bill was, that it was wholly nugatory; that it was legislating in vain, and trying to do by Act of Parliament that which the two Houses could do by resolution only, if they should be so minded.

LORD LANGDALE: My Lords, notwithstanding the objections of my noble and learned Friend, it appears to me that the House is much indebted to the noble Lord, who, by introducing this Bill, has brought a very important subject under your consideration. The inconveniences which the Bill is intended to remedy are very great, and are universally admitted. Bills are sent from one House to the other so late in the Session that from the usual mode of closing the Session, rather than from any necessity, they cannot be sufficiently discussed for want of time. If they are passed, it is without sufficient deliberation; if they are not passed, all the time which has been already bestowed upon them is thrown away. The remedy proposed is not intended to derogate from the prerogative of the Crown, or the privileges of either House; but when a Bill has passed one House and reaches the other at a period which, according to the usual mode of closing the Session, is too late to allow of sufficient discussion, it is proposed to enable that other House, by resolution made with the consent of the Crown, to adjourn the Bill without abatement till the next Session; providing that, if it should pass in the next Session even without alteration, it should nevertheless be returned to the House in which it first passed, to be there adopted or rejected by resolution. Thus an opportunity is given to the House in which it first passed, of abandoning their own Bill, if further reflection or any new circumstances should have made it desirable to do so. As there does not seem to be any very good reason why a prorogation should interrupt the progress of a good measure, more than an adjournment for an equal length of time, this Bill may seem to err in not going far enough, and providing that all measures pending at the time of a prorogation should be resumed *in statu quo* in the next Session. This was, in fact, at one time proposed; but it was rejected by the House of Commons, principally, I believe, on the suggestion of Sir Edward Coke. The present Bill relates only to Bills which have passed one House, and are adjourned by the other by the consent of the Crown. The principal objection is raised on the supposed ground that the Bill is unnecessary. It is said that either House may pass Bills, after only one or as many readings as it may think proper. I shall not question the power of either House to dispense with its Standing Orders, or to adopt as many or as few readings of a Bill, or any other measures whatever, as occasion may require. But considering that usage has sanctioned the particular forms and the several steps which are now usually taken in the passing of Bills, and that these forms and successive several steps are not usually or satisfactorily departed from without special and sufficient reason stated on each particular occasion, it does not seem likely that either House would be inclined to dispense with the safeguards and precautions secured by the existing general orders, by a new general order applicable to the whole class of the cases now contemplated. I think, therefore, that there is no weight in the objection; and it does not appear to me that any inconvenience is likely to arise from the provision which is made for fixing a day for a resumption of the Bill within a short period of the commencement of the next Session. My Lords, thinking as I do that the Bill is calculated to be of some use, I willingly support the third reading; but I own it appears to me that it will not afford an adequate remedy for the inconvenience complained of, and that after it shall have passed, as I hope it will, further measures will be required; and having made that observation, I hope your Lordships will excuse me for stating my opinion that the best if not the only means of guarding against hasty, rash, and indiscreet legislation is to bestow adequate care on the preparation of Bills before they are introduced into either House. A business so important ought not to be left to the diligence and caution of individual Members of Parliament, or even to the responsibility of particular Government offices, or Ministers, charged with other duties sufficient to occupy their whole time. No business is so difficult, or requires so much care, attention, and caution, as the business of making new laws; and I presume to think that no new law should be proposed by the Government without the official report of a responsible Minister, stating accurately and authoritatively what is the present state of the law with reference to the subject—what are the inconveniences which are found to arise from it—upon what principles it is proposed to provide a remedy—and how those principles are intended to be applied. If this were carefully done, we might reasonably hope to have less of rash and inconsiderate suggestion from ignorant and incompetent persons — less difficulty in dealing with such suggestions when made —less time wasted in idle and unnecessary discussions—more of useful deliberation, and less of hurry—a greater facility of preserving uniformity of enactment and expression — in short, better laws. And further, if proper means were taken to ascertain and correct the errors which must be found in almost every application of new laws, we might hope that the whole system of our laws would be gradually, effectually, and safely improved. But to do what ought to be done, towards attaining this great and important object, would require the constant and unremitting attention of Government, and the exclusive employment of a Minister charged with that particular duty. I conceive that by the constant attention and assistance of a Minister charged with the peculiar duty of attending to the affairs of legislation and justice, you might probably reduce to a small amount not only the inconveniences which this Bill is intended to diminish, but many other inconveniences of still greater importance. My Lords, I ought to apologise for saying so much upon a subject not immediately and directly under your consideration; though it seems sufficiently connected with it, not to be wholly irrelevant. I think this Bill likely to be useful, though not so effective as I could wish it to be; the discussion to which it will give rise may be more useful than the Bill itself. I feel obliged to the noble Lord for introducing it; and I willingly vote for the third reading in the hope that the time may come when the House will be disposed to consider the more effectual remedy which I have taken the liberty to suggest.

Lord WHARNCLIFFE supported the Bill, because it provided a remedy for an inconvenience which was gradually increasing. He would admit, however, with the noble Lord who brought in the Bill, that it was an imperfect mode of accomplishing the object which it proposed to effect.

Lord REDESDALE objected to the Bill, because he believed it would altogether fail to remedy the evils which it was intended to meet.

After a few words from Lord Monteagle and Lord Stanley, in reply,

On the question that the word " now" stand part of the Motion,

Resolved in the *Affirmative.*

Bill read 3^{a} and passed.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, June 2, 1848.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—1° Prisons; Appeals on Civil Bills (Dublin); Commons Inclosure.

Reported.—Law of Entail (Scotland).

Petitions Presented. By Dr. Bowring, and other Hon. Members, from a Number of Places, for an Extension of the Elective Franchise.—By Mr. Colvile, from Buckland Hollow, Derby, and by other Hon. Members, from several Places, for Better Observance of the Lord's Day.—By Mr. Duncan, from the Presbyterian Congregation at Lochee, in favour of the Places of Worship Sites (Scotland) Bill.—From the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons of the City of London, for an Alteration of the Law respecting Sunday Trading.—By Dr. Bowring, from the Cape of Good Hope, in favour of a Representative Legislature for that Place.—By Mr. Stansfield, from Merchants, and Others, of Huddersfield, for Alteration of the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Law.—By Mr. Clements, from Leitrim, for Inquiry into the Drumkeeran and Dromahair Fever Hospitals.—By Viscount Melgund, from the Town Council of Greenock, in favour of the Law of Entail (Scotland) Bill.—By Mr. Forbes, from the Commissioners of Supply of the County of Stirling, against the Lunatic Asylums (Scotland) Bill.—By Mr. Moffatt, from Clifton Dartmouth Hardness, in the County of Devon, against a Repeal of the Navigation Laws.—By Mr. Burroughes, from Officers of the Aylesham Union, Norfolk, in favour of a Superannuation Fund for Poor Law Officers.—By Mr. O'Flaherty, from the Parish of Kenvara (Galway, for Alteration of the Poor Law (Ireland).—By Mr. Brisco, from the Parish of Westfield (Sussex), to take the Turnpike Trusts into Consideration.

THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

Dr. BOWRING had to present a very remarkable petition, written in the Dutch language. He had compared the petition with the translation which accompanied it, and he could vouch for the accuracy of that translation. The petition emanated from the Dutch settlers at the Cape of Good Hope, who stated that in 1841 a large meeting had been held, at which a memorial to Her Majesty was agreed upon, imploring that the benefits of self-government might be granted to them; they also stated that if they had possessed representative institutions the expenditure of millions might have been saved to this country; and they prayed that the privileges of British citizens might be conceded to them.

ANSWER TO THE ADDRESS OF CONDOLENCE.

Mr. W. LASCELLES, Comptroller of the Royal Household, appeared at the bar, and read the following Answer from Her Majesty to the Address of Condolence presented to Her Majesty by the House on the death of the Princess Sophia:—

> " I have received with satisfaction the loyal and dutiful address of condolence the House of Commons has presented to me on the melancholy death of my beloved Aunt, the Princess Sophia, and regard it as a gratifying proof of their attachment to my person, family, and throne."

VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.

Mr. ANSTEY asked, whether the Government had received an official announcement of the removal of one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of Van Diemen's Land, and of proceedings being taken by the Governor with the intention of removing the other; and, if so, whether the Government intended to order the restoration of Mr. Justice Montagu, and the discontinuance of the proceedings against the Chief Justice; and to lay the correspondence on the table of the House?

Mr. HAWES had only just received despatches from the Governor of Van Diemen's Land, announcing the removal of one of the Judges of the Supreme Court; but the proceeding was taken under an Act of Parliament, and the Judge would be enabled to appeal to the Privy Council. It was no act of the Executive Government here, but the act of the Government on the spot. No accounts had arrived relating to any proceedings with regard to the removal of the Chief Justice. The despatches having only just arrived, and not having been, in fact, perused by the Secretary of State, he (Mr. Hawes) hoped to be excused saying more, or stating any opinion upon the circumstances.

Mr. ANSTEY gave notice that he

would move, on Tuesday, for the production of papers upon the subject.

On the Motion of Mr. PARKER, it was ordered that the House, at its rising, do adjourn to Monday next.

NAVIGATION LAWS—ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Order of the Day read for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Navigation Laws.

MR. GLADSTONE spoke as follows: In proceeding to request the indulgence of the House while I endeavour to lay before them the view which I am inclined to take of this most important and by no means easy question, I can assure them that I shall refrain entirely from troubling them with figures and with particular details. Enough has been done and will be done by other Gentlemen, I have no doubt, in that form of illustration of the general argument; and I shall only endeavour to lay before them the grounds which have led me to the opinions that I have formed. The question which is at present under our consideration is not exactly whether we consider the plan of the Government in all its details, or even in its leading outline, to be the best plan that could by possibility have been adopted; the question fairly raised, as I think, by the Motion of my right hon. Friend (Mr. Herries) is, whether we are prepared, and prepared at this time, to make an extensive change, not only in secondary particulars, but in the principles of the navigation laws. To that question, thus fairly raised, I am ready to give a deliberate answer in the affirmative. Indeed, when I read the Motion of my right hon. Friend, I was afraid that many would have no difficulty in giving it such a construction as to make it—what I am sure he did not mean it to be—equivalent to nothing; because there are not many will say that there are no "proved inconveniences" whatever attending the navigation law, and that you cannot alter it in any particular—that you cannot scrape so much as a single filing off it, without so far "endangering our maritime strength." But that is not his opinion, and I am far from intending to charge him with it. I understand his description of the navigation law: it is quite clear and succinct; I understand his description to be, that the principles of the navigation law were these—that in your domestic trade and your colonial trade you should secure an absolutely exclusive right to the British shipowner; but that in your foreign trade with the whole world it was a perfectly fair question how far upon principles of reciprocity you might admit the foreigner to an equality of dealing; and, unless I greatly misunderstood him, he stated that he was himself prepared, with respect to the foreign trade of the country, by no means to take his stand upon the present law, but to discuss with one nation and another the extension of trading privileges upon an equal footing, so far as regards all branches of our commerce, except those which relate to the dominions of Her Majesty. Understanding these to be the principles of the navigation law, it is my opinion that they ought to be altered, and that this is the most seasonable time for making the alteration. Great attempts have been made to throw upon the proposers of this measure the onus of proving a necessity for it. It has been treated as if this were a thing new and unheard of in our Legislature—as if it had no analogy in principle to the recent commercial legislation of the country. Sir, the recent commercial legislation of the country has been founded upon the principle, that upon the whole the more free and unrestricted you can make the application of competition to the principles of trade, the better will trade be conducted; and that principle, which has now been applied with certain limitations to nearly every great interest in the country, is the identical principle on which it is proposed to alter the navigation laws, and, being the identical principle on which the proceedings of Parliament for so many years have been founded, the onus of proof surely rather lies upon those who contend that the navigation laws ought to remain as they are. But it is unnecessary to rest the issue upon any discussion which might arise as to which party was bound to prove his case; in my opinion there never was an instance in which the proof was more distinct, that if you ought to legislate you ought to legislate at this moment. Why, surely the attitude taken by foreign States, and States of the first importance, is quite enough to show—I will not say that we ought to abolish or even to modify the navigation law, but that this is the time to make up our minds about it—this is the time to examine and to decide finally whether it is to continue in substance a portion of our code, or whether we are to proceed upon a different basis. America has, in my opinion, gained to herself great honour by the challenge she has thrown at the foot of Her Majesty's Government. But there is not only that friendly challenge which we have received—there is the notice of a less friendly character, denounced by my right hon. Friend as a menace, which Prussia likewise has placed before us. And I must say frankly on the part of Prussia, without being an enthusiastic admirer of the commercial legislation to which she of late years has been a party, that I do not think she has deserved the rebuke which my right hon. Friend administered to her. She has given notice that she intends to require at our hands an entire equality of dealing, and failing her success in that purpose, that it is her intention to abrogate the conventions subsisting between her and this country. Now, it is true, I apprehend, that on the very face of those conventions Prussia is not at this moment upon a footing of equality with us. At this moment the access to the ports of Prussia from the ports of the globe is guaranteed by treaty to British ships; but, on the other hand, Prussian ships are not allowed admittance to the ports of this country upon terms of equality unless they proceed from ports of Prussia only. Is not Prussia perfectly entitled to demand that equality from us? And is it wise on the part of my right hon. Friend to speak of Prussia and her commercial position in the slighting terms he applied to her on Monday night? He is the very last man who could be deceived by the mere accident that the Customs returns of this country in the figures by which they measure our trade with Prussia happen to be fallacious. He must know well that for commercial purposes Prussia represents to us a population of 20,000,000 or 25,000,000, who are among the very greatest consumers of our commodities in Europe, and that there is no trade which we carry on throughout the whole compass of the globe more important to us than the trade with Prussia, and the other members of the commercial league formed under her auspices. As regards commerce, Prussia is a first-class Power. As regards justice, Prussia is entitled to demand equality with us. The day has gone by when we can look down upon other countries in this respect, and arrogate to ourselves privileges which we are not prepared to yield to them. And, as regards the menace Prussia has uttered, I say that if she entertained the intention she was entitled to entertain—if she meant, unless we relax our navigation law, to tighten hers, it was not an unfriendly course—it was a fair, a just, and a friendly course, to give us clear and full notice of her intentions, and afford us thereby an opportunity of escaping the evil which a persistence in our present system would not fail to draw down upon us. Then, with regard to the case of the colonies; my right hon. Friend seems to think that, because we have not a flood of petitions pouring in from our colonies, there is no urgent cause, so far as they are concerned, for taking the matter into consideration. That was just the case with the United States while they were our colonies, that little notice was taken of the restrictions this country from time to time laid upon the navigation of those colonies, until the crisis of those colonies came, and then it was that all those grievances were raked up against us. But those restraints upon the navigation of the colonies were regarded as taxes imposed upon them for our benefit, and not for theirs; and if it be true that the colonist's command of the means of conveyance for his produce is limited by the provisions of our navigation law, depend upon it, whether you hear of it now and in the form of petitions or not, at one time or other, and in one form or other, you will hear of it. It is impossible, upon principles of justice, that it should not be so. But I think the right hon. Gentleman rather went beyond the literal truth when he said that Parliament had now determined that there should be no preference whatever for colonial commodities, because, undoubtedly, a scale exists upon our Statute-book, without any fixed term assigned for its duration in several important instances; and, although we are travelling towards that point, it cannot, I think, yet be said that we have attained it. But now let us look at the Australian colonies. It cannot be said quite literally, but there is no important exception to the proposition, that the Australian colonies derive no benefit from our navigation laws. You require them to send their wool to this market to compete with the wool of Germany, which has to be carried an eighth of the distance. Is it fair that they should likewise be limited in the choice of their freights, and that if they find a German ship in one of their ports that has come out with emigrants, they should be obliged to refuse that ship, and not be allowed to send their produce home in her? What have we just done with respect to copper ore? We have declared that the copper ore of Cuba and

Chili shall be admitted on the same terms as the ore of our own possessions. Now, some valuable mines of copper ore have lately been opened in South Australia, and you tell your fellow-subjects in that colony that they shall have no preference for their ore in the home market; and, more than that, you do, in effect, place a differential duty upon them, because you permit those who produce ore in Cuba to choose the ship in which they will send it, whilst you compel the South Australian miner to pay whatever freight the British shipowner, in the exercise of his exclusive privilege, may demand. It appears to me that a good deal of misunderstanding prevails with respect to Jamaica. It has been represented that the Jamaicans were anxious for an alteration of the navigation laws, only because they thought it would be the means of reducing freights to this country; but it is now apparent that the measure will confer an equal privilege on the Cuba producer, and, therefore, no relative advantage can accrue to the Jamaicans. That, I understand, is the argument which is held to be sufficient to destroy the force of the memorial from Jamaica in favour of the repeal of the navigation laws. But surely this is a great fallacy. I must here advert to the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Stamford. He told the House that he was willing to allow American ships to bring produce to this country from all parts of the world, on condition that equal privileges were conferred upon us. He is willing to allow the planter of Cuba to send his sugar to this country in American vessels, and thereby to gain whatever advantage is to be obtained by the reduction of freights; but, in his affection for Jamaica and the other British colonies—in his desire to hug them in the closest embrace—he insists that with respect to them the monopoly of the British shipowner shall continue. It appears to me that the result of such an arrangement would be to give the foreigner in Cuba an advantage which is denied to the British planter in our own colonies. Another circumstance marks the present moment as a time eminently suitable for carrying out fully the principle involved in the proposition which has been submitted to the House. During the last five or six years we have entered on an active course of commercial legislation; and it cannot be denied that we have done more than was ever before done in a similar time. We have done more than ever can be done again to add to the bulk and weight of imports into this country. By taking that course we have immensely stimulated the shipping interest, and greatly enlarged the field of employment. We have done more than ever can be done again to increase the profits of shipowners; and, therefore, I venture to think that now is the time, before any great speculation in British shipping should cause the supply to overtake and perhaps pass beyond the demand, to subject the British shipowner to competition with a wider field of rivalry than he has hitherto been exposed to. An important question is raised with reference to this subject. The relation of the question with the defences of the country is one of vital importance, which no one could be justified in omitting from view in considering the subject; and when I see the noblemen and gentlemen of England, who are themselves stripped of protection, coming forward, and from motives, of which I do not for a moment dispute the sacredness, maintaining for others the protection which they have lost themselves, and that too not only from an abstract attachment to commercial restrictions, but because they conscientiously believe that the proposed alteration of the navigation laws will be injurious to the power and the defences of the country, I am more than ever bound to give the objection my serious consideration. I must own that I am not prepared—it may be owing to weakness of nerve—to follow the right hon. Member for Manchester, in the lofty flight which he took with reference to the subject. I am not prepared to say, that with the view of gaining an accession of trade to this country, I would deprive the British Navy of all possible resort to the mercantile marine in the event of a war or sudden emergency. I concur with the right hon. Gentleman in entertaining a sanguine hope that the commercial legislation of this country, with its benign contagion, so to speak, will spread itself slowly among other nations, and become the rule of general legislation; that it will prove a tie which will much strengthen the bonds of amity which unite different countries, and diminish the frequency of wars. I cannot, however, concur with the right hon. Gentleman in his sanguine prophecy, and anticipate that universal peace will immediately follow the declaration of freedom of commerce. The untoward fate which has attended some recent prophecies with respect to revolutions, will make me very cautious in giving faith to predictions for the future. And I must say that, judging from the past, if the right hon. Gentleman or any other person should prophesy that universal peace would follow the repeal of the navigation laws, so far from believing him, I should rather entertain a suspicion that a general war would be raging within a week. With reference, however, to the important question to which I have just adverted, I may remark that the facilities for manning the Navy by the aid of the merchant service appear to be greater, if we may judge from experience, than we are led to suppose. If I recollect accurately, the late Secretary to the Admiralty stated during a former discussion, that at the breaking out of the war in 1793, our naval force did not exceed 16,000 or 18,000 men, whilst our mercantile marine amounted to only 1,500,000 tons—it now amounts to 4,500,000 tons—and yet, within eighteen months from that period, we had 86,000 men on board the fleet. Undoubtedly the introduction of steam in the Navy must exercise a most important influence on the question, chiefly because it is to steam vessels we must mainly look for the execution of those sudden operations which render the power of a sudden resort to the mercantile marine for the purpose of manning the Navy a matter of such importance. After stating these limitations, however, I confess it appears to me that the decision of the House must depend mainly on the question, what is to be the commercial effect of relaxing or removing the navigation laws? Are we to expect by the adoption of that measure to give a wholesome stimulus to our mercantile marine, and to extend the field of employment; or, on the contrary, will that marine dwindle away under the influence of competition, and be reduced to so low a point that the country could no longer depend upon it for furnishing a supply of men to the Navy in the event of a sudden emergency? On that issue I am ready to stake the whole question. I am prepared to advocate an alteration in the navigation laws on my conviction, supported by arguments, that the effect of a judicious change will be, not to limit, but to strengthen and extend the commerce, and, with the commerce, the navigation of this country. On the other side, the advocates of the retention of the law say, "How is it possible that the British shipowner can exist under competition with foreign countries, when he pays more for his timber than the Russian, more for the wages of his men than the Dane, and more for their food than most foreign nations?" I will not stop to inquire whether these allegations are strictly accurate. I believe that they are somewhat exaggerated; but I think we have no reason to apprehend that in a fair contest the British shipowner will be left behind his rivals, let them belong to what nation of the globe they may. If we are to fear the Danes and Swedes on account of the means of cheaper construction and manning, how is it, I ask, that those nations have not already driven us out of the carrying trade of the world? Let any candid man answer this question. How is it that British ships proceed in multitudes year after year from the port of Rio to the port of Trieste? I am not now speaking of that which is called—though not with strict accuracy perhaps—the direct trade of this country. The Danes have had plenty of time to think about it; and if they are unable to drive you out of trades which are strictly and literally unprotected, why should we fear that they will succeed in doing so after the repeal of the navigation laws? Is the cheapness of ships an important advantage? Then why do not the British shipowners have their vessels built in British North America, where they can be made as cheaply as in any part of the world? I remember that about four years ago a movement took place in this country, the object of which was to protect the British shipbuilder against the competition to which he is exposed with the builder in British North America. Upon that occasion it was stated that it is usual to build ships in Canada or New Brunswick, to freight them with timber, and send them to this country, where, after the sale of the cargo, the ship is sold for less than the cost price, the speculator being satisfied with the profit which he has made by the timber. That statement was made by a high authority, and I have no reason to doubt its accuracy. It is evident, then, that not only is the British shipowner able to have ships built as cheaply as they can be made in any country of the world, but that he can buy them under prime cost. Why does he not buy them? Because they will not last; and that observation applies to the cheap ships of all foreign nations. The facts quoted by the hon. Member for Dartmouth last night, proved that since the existence of the reciprocity treaties, their mercantile marine has made less progress than ours. If there be any real advantage in cheap ships, how happens it that our shipowners go on building dearer and dearer ships every year? It is a remarkable fact, and pregnant with instruction, that the books of Lloyd's show of late years an increase of vessels of the higher class, built, of course, at a greater cost than ships of a lower class. With respect to the cheapness of seamen, why should we fear the Danes, when the Americans did not fear them? The Americans pay their seamen higher wages than we do, and the American vessels are supplied on a more expensive scale than ours are; yet the Americans do not fear the Danes. On the contrary, they are superior to the Danes in the commerce of the world. Their commerce extends over the whole globe, and their shipping increases more rapidly than that of the Danes or Swedes. But we feared not American rivalry. Why then fear that of the Danes? Away with the bugbear of cheapness! It is not cheap but dear countries we have to fear—countries that possess capital, enterprise, industry, and intelligence; and I hesitate not to express my conviction, that in any one of those particulars we shall be able to meet any other country, and to beat it. I say, therefore, that, as far as we can form a judgment from any elements of this kind, there really is no reason why we should apprehend serious or permanent injury to any branch of the maritime trade of this country, or to the interest of the shipowner, from the fair and just competition of other nations. At the same time, I fully grant that the system it is proposed we should proceed to alter, is a very complicated one. Its operation has no doubt been, to give, in many instances, an artificial form to our trade, and induce people to rely on what they ought not to depend upon, instead of leaving them to rely only on what they could command, and the advantages they might legitimately avail themselves of. We are here destroying not merely a single monopoly of the shipowner at the expense of the public; we are called upon to undo a complicated web of distinct interests, one compensating another, but all of them subsisting at the expense of the public. The shipowner is invested with monopoly in many instances against the foreigner; but the shipowner has to meet the monopoly of the seaman. The monopoly of the seaman is again counterworked by the shipowner being forced to carry a greater number of apprentices than he would do if left to his own discretion. He is also limited as to power in bringing certain goods from certain countries. Then the rates of charge on shipowners for lights and pilotage are very high—higher than they ought to be, and higher than they might have been had the shipowner, being exposed to fair competition, earnestly bestirred himself to get these lights and pilotage dues reduced to the lowest point at which the service could be done. The shipowner, again, is subject to the disadvantage of impressment. In this respect he has suffered much; and in calling on him to relinquish any advantage he may have derived, or may think he has derived, from the restrictions imposed on trade by the navigation laws, we must, of course, I apprehend, be prepared to remove entirely from him all the fetters which now affect him. In my opinion there is not one of these fetters that can be allowed justly to remain. I fully grant the shipowner has a right to claim at our hands everything any class can claim. As far as any class can be entitled to special regard for its interests, I say this is the class. I say the shipowner is entitled to require perfect freedom in the purchase of his ship—he has a perfect right to own a foreign-built ship if he pleases. I won't go into the question whether foreign-built ships should, according to the analogy of your tariff, be subject to a moderate duty. But if the ships of the Baltic be so cheap and so good, he should be allowed to purchase them if he thinks proper. I must also distinctly state—although here I am sorry to differ from the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade on a point I hope he regards as not essential, but only a matter of detail—if we destroy the navigation laws, I do not think we should require the shipowner to man his ship with three-fourths of British hands. This would be alike contrary to policy and justice. It is contrary to policy, for what inducement would the shipowner then have to register at all? If you continue a legal restriction of that kind, he will not register his ship as a British ship. But I think it is also plainly contrary to justice. I think it is not fair to require the shipowner to enter into unlimited competition with one of his hands tied. If you leave the importer of produce free in his choice of the ship which is to carry his goods to this country, it is impossible to argue in the same breath that the British shipowner is to be restricted in the choice of the men by whom to navigate his vessel. That, I think, is a feature of the Government plan which cannot survive the ordeal to which, of course, the measure will be subjected in detail by the Committee. Upon every point the shipowner should be left at perfect liberty. With respect to impressment, even, the shipowner has a right to be free. I do not now enter into the question, on which I do not feel qualified to pronounce a judgment, whether, under all circumstances, we may not dispense with impressment; but this I do say, if it be necessary for the public interests that impressment be maintained, the shipowner has an absolute right to be compensated. We have no right to make him the victim of public convenience. Then the seaman has a sort of monopoly against the shipowner. But what is his predicament? Is he not punished for it? He is subjected to competition from boys; he is liable to be ousted from employment by the necessity the shipowner lies under to carry a certain number of boys. He is liable also to service in the Navy, and—what is a grievous hardship—he is subject to a tax on his wages, in the shape of a contribution to the Merchant Seamen's Fund. The law is altogether exceptional, and, as now worked, it is totally impossible that it can continue. I am not for giving up the tax; but if you choose to maintain the exceptional law for the seaman, you must see that he enjoys the advantage of it. I wish to have it so worked as to render it beneficial for its objects. Every argument of policy is in favour of revising it. But what is now the condition of the seaman in almost every port? You profess to provide him with a pension, but not one-fourth part of what a pauper in every workhouse enjoys. You interfere with his profits, and withdraw part of his wages under the pretence of making a provision for him in old age, which is no provision at all; and you leave him in many instances in a worse position than that of a pauper, with a miserable pension—which cannot give him anything like support—after having paid a price for which he ought to have received a full and honourable recompense. Now, if the monopoly of the seaman should be destroyed, I say, on the other hand, that the seaman ought to be relieved of these disadvantages. So of the shipbuilder, again; if he can show that he labours under disadvantages which it is in the power of the Legislature to remove, we ought to remove them. I think the shipbuilder will have great difficulty in showing that he labours under those disadvantages. I think it will appear in evidence, that as regards steamship building, he is already in a position of immense, almost unapproachable, advantage. In building sailing vessels he has also great advantages. The Legislature has made great efforts to relieve him from the disadvantages he formerly laboured under. He has a perfectly free command of the means of victualling his ship; he has a perfect command of all the metals that are required in the building of his ship; he has a perfectly free command of the materials of sails and cordage. With regard to timber, there is only, after all, a very limited burden imposed on him, in the shape of a tax of 15*s.* per load. The portion of Baltic or other foreign timber, which he uses in building his ships, is very small. The chief material used he has close by—British oak, and that he has cheaper and readier than any of his rivals. Even with respect to the portion of Baltic or other foreign timber, he may require in the construction of British-built ships, I do not see why that proposition should not be revived which was made by Mr. Huskisson, although it did not then meet with a very favourable reception — that a drawback should be allowed on the materials employed in the shipbuilding trade. It is within the power of Parliament to relieve the shipbuilder in that respect, while it exposes him to competition. It would not be fair to assume—for myself I deprecate the assumption—that this measure involves a general censure either on British seamen, or British shipmasters, or shipowners. The object of such a measure undoubtedly is, that you may get the trade of the country carried on in the best way and at the smallest cost; but it is not fair to represent it as involving any general censure on those who do carry it on. Much has been said of the consular reports, and the qualifications and character of masters and seamen. I have no doubt there has been some exaggeration on that subject; but, on the other hand, I have no doubt that from the very fact of the unrivalled inborn seamanship of the British subject, he may have been less careful in accomplishing himself in his profession, than has been the case with the seaman of other countries, who had fewer advantages. I cannot doubt that you might by judicious measures improve in some important particulars the standard of professional accomplishments as regards the mercantile character of shipmasters. It is painful to observe the difference between the rates of insurance with reference respectively to ships and cargoes. The superiority of the British shipbuilder is asserted unequivocally by those impartial judges the insurance-offices; he can insure his ship lower than the shipowner of any other country. But it is painful to read that the insurance effected on the cargo of a British ship is higher. And why is it so? Is it true or not that in many instances greater care is bestowed on his cargo by the foreign than the British master? I have myself heard of cases of British merchants being compelled to send orders to their correspondents not to ship by British vessels, because in foreign vessels goods were better taken care of. Here is one point on which an improvement may be brought about by legislation. By the number of men employed on board ship, and the disposition to economise labour, as the Americans economise, something may be effected. Great as are the enterprise, skill, and vigilance, of those who make the mercantile marine of England, you may raise them to a higher point by subjecting that marine to a less restricted application of the principle of competition. Nor would it be fair to represent the object of this measure, to reduce freights. This may be an incident of it, very possibly. But, in the first place, it is also possible that there might be great benefit to the public in the better care of cargoes, in greater despatch, and in various other ways, enough to justify the measure, without any serious reduction of freights; and, on the other hand, it is equally undeniable that there might be a reduction of freights without detriment to the shipowner. His field of employment being extended, he might afford to take a full freight at lower rates, rather than wait longer in port, and have his ship at last half empty. Upon general grounds, therefore, I cannot have the least hesitation in thinking that we have reached that time when we ought to contemplate an extensive alteration of the navigation laws; and I have only now to state to the House what occurs to me with respect to the form of the measure proposed by the Government. And here I must confess that in several not unimportant particulars I should have preferred that the Government had determined to pursue a somewhat different course with regard to the form of their measure. I will state first an important point on which I should have preferred a measure that might in its first effect have been more restricted, and more gradual in its operation. Although I fully admit that the question is not free from difficulty—although I reserve to myself the opportunity of deriving information and advantage from the lights others may throw on this discussion, I should have wished, on the whole, that Government had thought fit to adhere to what has been almost the invariable course of precedent, sanctioned by utility and convenience—I say not also by justice—and had made the large concessions of privilege they propose conditional and limited by reciprocal treatment from other countries. If I may describe the manner I should have preferred, I would quote simply the words which the right hon. Gentleman informed the House Mr. Bancroft employed on the part of the United States. I know the many limitations now imposed on the trade of Europe might, in some particulars, have made it necessary for you to proceed unconditionally; but with regard to the great question, cargoes coming from all parts of the globe, all goods irrespective of origin, and with regard to the colonial and the coasting trade, I should have wished the Government to say to every country, "If you do little, we will do little; if you do much, we will do much; and if you do all, we will do all." Now, I will state the reasons on which that opinion is founded. I know it is an opinion that will not be popular in this House. I don't think the adoption of it would materially sweeten the cup commended to the taste of the shipowners of this country. The very name of reciprocity is extremely unpopular to those who are attached to the principles of commercial freedom. But I think that is an unjust prejudice, derived from the universal, unequivocal failure of all attempts to contract engagements of reciprocity in customs duties. I admit their failure in the fullest terms, without qualification, great or small; but I contend that the two subjects are entirely distinct. We have failed entirely in the formation of tariffs on the reciprocal relaxation of customs duties. As a matter of argument I take the negotiation with Portugal. We say, "We will reduce the duties on port wine from 5*s*. 6*d*. to 3*s*. 6*d*. per gallon, provided you reduce your duty on British woollens from 50 or 60 to 20 per cent." Well, now, are the materials which it is attempted to compare together, in any respect commensurable with each other? Have the interests that are brought into contact with one another, any particular relation one to the other? The producer of cloths in England does indeed derive an indirect benefit from the reduction of the duty on Portuguese wines; but he does not derive that direct, palpable, immediate, and paramount benefit which would be derived by the shipowner, from a diminution of the duty. Their interests are not at all the same. You ask to have the duty on British cloths reduced with a view to the general extension of trade; but if the British shipowner, trading to Spain, and paying double duties, has to compete with Spanish ships, that pay only single duties, the effect is to create an absolute monopoly for the latter. We have a remarkable instance of this in the trade with the British East Indies. For many years the trade from this country to the East Indies has been opened to American vessels as well as to vessels of other nations. I am afraid it is true they have not availed themselves of that permission; and why? Because, although the duty levied is extremely low, yet, double duties being charged upon the Americans, they are thereby practically excluded from the trade. Now, I have this fear, that if you do not stipulate for the abolition of these double duties, in many instances you will have a practical monopoly established against you. I do not think there is much in this question as a matter of practice, because I am disposed to believe, and I ardently hope, that America on the one hand, and the Baltic Powers on the other, will enter into the establishment of a system of unconditional freedom on both sides. But when I look at the policy of Holland, which, though liberal in its customs duties, is not so in regard to its navigation—and when I look to the policy of France, of Spain, and of the Italian States —I must confess I have considerable apprehensions, not of any great, permanent, or vital injury being inflicted on the vast interests of the British shipping, because those interests are too extended to be seriously injured by the policy of a few European countries, but my great fear is, that much mischief will be done by affording a scope to the indulgence of the selfish and narrow views of those countries, and that much hardship will be inflicted upon the shipowners by their being excluded, by the force of the double duties, from trading with those countries, and that they will lose the great benefit which the public would otherwise derive from a system of freedom in the carrying trade of the world. It has always been admitted by the advocates of reciprocity duties, that if it were possible to secure a double benefit by treaties with other countries, it was highly important to do so. It has always been granted that the beneficial effects of free trade must be greatly limited and restricted if this country should have to proceed in carrying out its principles independently of other countries and at its own risk, and that that circumstance alone made it worth while to exert our best efforts to secure the double benefit of reciprocity treaties. In this case, therefore, it is required in fairness to the interests of the shipowners, as well as to your merchants and manufacturers, that you should endeavour to secure the double benefit of such treaties. But what has been the answer with regard to these treaties? The answer has been, that the reciprocity system was a failure—that it was impracticable—that, however good and desirable it might be in theory, it was not feasible, and therefore, being compelled to choose between acting by ourselves, or not at all, we have acted for ourselves, rather than not at all. But that, Sir, is not the alternative before us. If it were, I should not feel it necessary to say that I should feel myself bound to a course of inaction. But I think the practicability of proceeding on the plan of reciprocity can be established. You have not the difficulty of comparing stipulations on the one side and on the other; there is not the same opportunity now as heretofore for ignorance and prejudice to find their way into the discussion of the question, or to clothe with the clouds of uncertainty the future, by vague statements in respect to the customs duties—you have merely to say, "Here is the plan; its provisions are perfectly understood; we found no difficulty in proceeding with that plan before." This course was open to you, and is so still, and on the whole, I think it would have been advantageous and safe to have preferred that course in the present instance. But even the measure which you now propose is not, after all, an unconditional measure. It is proposed to reserve a power to the Queen in Council. First of all, you abolish all restrictions on navigation, and then you place in the hands of the Queen a power to impose countervailing duties on all countries who do not grant to us the same advantages as we concede to them. I confess it appears to me that, instead of that plan, it would have been wiser to have proceeded by treaties of reciprocity. I think there is a great objection to conferring such a power as that which is proposed to be given to the Queen in Council. I grant a similar power has been given in former instances, but not in so extensive and important a matter. Certainly it was given in the case of the Corn Bill; but I remember observing hon. Members smile when it was proposed, because everybody understood that it was a mere *brutum fulmen.* No one believed that the Corn Bill was to be repealed, as against any particular country that might levy a duty upon British goods which the Government might think excessive. There was the case of opening the colonial trade; but that was a very peculiar case. Mr. Huskisson's object, on that occasion, was to bring rivals in the trade against the Americans. It was not a case beginning *de novo ;* it was not a case *res integra.* The Americans already possessed the trade with our colonies, and the object of Mr. Huskisson was to let in other countries to participate in that trade. But, in the present instance, we ought to know, because it is a material point, whether it is intended to retain this power as a dormant power, or whether the Government means to act upon it against those countries that do not reciprocate with us. It is quite plain that hostile interests will force from the Government a most explicit pledge on this subject. The Government will be required to define distinctly to what class of cases they mean that power to be applied. I think they do not intend it to remain dormant, but to be *boná fide,* and by virtue of that power at their discretion to reimpose differential duties in order to extort reciprocity from those nations that would be otherwise inclined to pursue an illiberal course. If they do so, I must confess, although I have no want of confidence in the present Government for such a purpose, and I would as soon leave that power in the hands of the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Board of Trade, of whose honour and candour all who know him are aware, as in the hands of any person whatever; yet at the same time I think it too large and delicate a question to be left in the hands of the Executive, without obvious and pressing necessity. I think it a power, the concession of which will be extremely disagreeable to the right hon. Gentleman: the pressure from one quarter and another will oblige him to regret powers which are of an order that should be reserved for the decision of Parliament. And if it is intended that it should be a living and practical power, which you are to put in force in case of need—and it is obvious you cannot otherwise exercise it honestly—then you would, I think, proceed more safely and wisely by undoing piecemeal the system you have got, than by sweeping it away in order to reconstruct it piecemeal, and then shortly afterwards, in all probability, pull it down again. Though I admit this question to be one of difficulty, then, I must differ from the Government with respect to their form of procedure; but I ask no credit whatever from the shipowners for that difference of opinion, because I frankly avow my belief that, as respects all those who may be looked upon as the more formidable rivals—the Baltic Powers and the Americans, who are certainly entitled to the name of formidable rivals—I believe you will have reciprocity, whether you pass the Bill in this form, or in the form which I should prefer. Then with respect to the restrictions you propose still to retain, I have already said I think it impossible to pass a measure of this kind, striking at the root of the navigation laws in all essential particulars, and preserve the restriction on the shipowner of obliging him to man his ships with three-fourths of the crew British seamen. His claim in that respect, I think, is absolutely irrefragable. I am inclined also to differ from the Government with respect to the restrictions they propose to retain upon the fisheries. As the right hon. Gentleman has not yet referred to that subject in detail, and I do not know certainly what his reasons may be for retaining those restrictions, I will not go into detail respecting it, but I must make a few remarks on another and very important restriction which the Government propose to retain—I mean the coasting trade. I confess I am aware of no reason whatever why the coasting trade should not be dealt with exactly in the same way as you deal with the colonial trade. The right hon. Gentleman adverted to the danger to the revenue that would ensue if this were acted upon. That, of course, is a subject which he and his Colleagues in office are much better qualified to judge of than I am; and if it can be shown that real danger to the revenue would occur by opening the coasting trade, I confess you have an argument against that measure; but subject to that qualification, I am adverse to the restriction. I disapprove of it not merely upon practical grounds, and because I wish to arrive at a solution of this question which shall be a complete settlement of it, and which shall leave nothing further to be debated in this House; but if the right hon. Gentleman will favour me with his attention for a few moments, I can show him that the exclusive retention of the coasting trade, whilst it is of no importance to the British shipowner, will have the effect of materially lessening the advantage you are anxious to obtain for the British shipowner in other countries. There is no quarrel between us on the ground that reciprocity is desirable; we are unfeignedly anxious for the benefit of the British shipowner, and desirous to extend the field of his employ; we are desirous to obtain for him from foreign countries, if it can be obtained, the same extended liberty we give them as regards our own. Look, then, at the bearing of this principle on your commercial relations with America. I will not advert to any other country, because I cannot assume that there is any other to which the coasting trade would be of the same importance, although, when I remember that the coasting trade of the Miditerranean was at one period carried on to a great extent in British vessels, I am by no means prepared to deny that our coasting trade might not be of the utmost advantage to other countries. I believe the coasting trade of America would be of the utmost advantage to our shipping. ["Hear!"] Yes, I cannot but understand the words of Mr. Bancroft, in his note to the noble Lord opposite, as meant to imply a graduated or sliding-scale of concessions. I understand him to say, "we are ready, if you are ready, to make short work of it; we are willing to give to the British flag all the privileges which you may give to the Americans." Now, what are you going to do by this measure? You are not going to give the coasting trade to the Americans. If I am asked what is likely to be the most serious inconvenience the British shipowner will suffer before this question is thoroughly settled, I should be very much disposed to answer, the rivalry of the Americans in the colonial trade. Well, you are not going to give your coasting trade to the Americans, though probably few Gentlemen will be found to entertain apprehensions that if it were thrown open to them, there would be many vessels under the stripes and stars engaged in it; and therefore its concession would not practically be a very serious one for our own shipping interests, though in giving them the colonial trade you give them something which we have a right to regard as of far greater magnitude. America has no colonies; but she has a coasting trade equivalent to a colonial trade, and in carrying on which our connections to the north and south of her territory are in a condition to enable us to take a very useful part in assisting her shipowners. I say, then, we ought to be prepared to make to America this demand. Let us give her the coasting trade, and we are entitled, not merely in policy but in justice, to ask her for her coasting trade. But let us give her the colonial trade without the coasting trade, and we give her the valuable boon whilst we withhold the worthless; but we cannot say to her, "Give us all, for we have given you all." But this is a matter of very great importance; and it appears to me a very forcible argument for including the coasting trade in any arrangement you may make. In the general principles of the relaxation of the navigation laws, it is evident, I think, from what I have said, I cordially concur with Her Majesty's Ministers; I am sincerely desirous to give them an effectual support in carrying their measure, and should be extremely unwilling to take any step that could hinder its progress. On the other hand, I hope they will not feel themselves precluded from accepting any suggestion I have thrown out, in case they should be convinced, after discussion, that it would be an improvement. But with respect to the general principles on which we are to proceed, never did I feel more confident either of their soundness or of their applicability to the case in hand, or that the time is come which is marked out by a singular combination of circumstances as the time for proceeding to action. Really, when I heard yesterday the clerk at the table read a petition from the city of London, signed by names of great authority, in which it was stated that this was the last moment at which we ought to proceed to touch the navigation laws, I asked myself, to what class of considerations could these gentlemen be turning their minds? What view could they take of the recent proceedings in foreign countries? The invitation of America through her Minister—the menace, if such it may be called, of Prussia—the recent augmentation of our imports; I remember no case of a great problem in which the preliminary question of time was so plainly determined for us by a combination of important circumstances. In another sense, indeed, the phrase of the petition may be true, that this is the last moment for considering the navigation laws; for it may be true, if we postpone this measure for a year or two, that we will no longer have the opportunity of considering it. It is painful to find—but though it may excite regret, it cannot excite surprise—that when we have endeavoured to plead the relaxation of our commercial code as an argument for the concession of similar relaxations on their part, we have always been met with the observation, that that argument comes too late from us, who have clung to our restraints as long as we could, and never surrendered them except under the pressure of overpowering necessity. When I consider what are the avowed opinions of one great Power—what is the course of political change on the Continent, not favourable, I fear, to commercial freedom—I am afraid that if you refuse to consider the friendly offer which Prussia has made you, it may be the last moment you may have for considering the question. But as respects the application of those principles to shipping, why should the shipowner fear it? Does he labour under any other disadvantage than what applies to any other trade in the country? Can you speak to any man in England who does not urge to you, as a reason for his being protected, that he has to pay higher wages, and higher prices for a portion of his materials, than are paid in foreign countries? Do not these statements apply equally to the shipowner? But yet these classes are able, not only to hold up their heads in the general competition, but to head the race. And so with the shipowner—he has the same advantages open to him as to any one else, nay, in some respects greater: the unparalleled cheapness of capital in England—the encouraging trade with foreign countries, so that his employment lies at his own door, instead of his having to go, like others, for a field in search of it—the immense commercial connexions of this country—its high commercial character, which has a pecuniary as well as a moral value in the conduct of business—its geographical position, so remarkably placed as it is between the great seats of commerce in Europe and America, as if she were the central point, and they the extremities. Besides that, he has that which lies at the root of the whole—the maritime genius of the people, which makes the Englishman feel at home on the wave—that power which characterises him beyond almost all the nations of the globe, which makes it true of the British navigator and merchant that the whole world is their home, as of the illustrious dead it was said that the whole world was their tombs. With these advantages, once liberated from the artificial habits which have grown upon him, surely he ought not to dread the permanent effects of any competition to which he may be exposed. But he will not dread it: the expressions which seem to imply dread are but like the expressions which have proceeded from other classes of men under similar circumstances. It is quite true that great legislative changes have been descried by them as the offspring of mere theory; but when they have been tested by circumstances and results, there is hardly any case in which their soundness has not been admitted. Look at the reciprocity treaties which you were told, from 1825 down to a very recent period, had ruined the commerce of this country. There is a remarkable passage in a report of the Shipowners' Society, in which I cannot help thinking we detect the authorship of our excellent friend, Mr. Young, ascribing to them a multitude of calamities, and amongst them the total incapacity of British shipowners to compete with foreign in the present state of the navigation laws. Two years more elapse, and we are told the state of things is so satisfactory that no attempt should be made to interfere with it! These are not theories, but attempts to apply the results of past experience to the future condition of the world. We are bound so to consider them, and to do everything we can, with a fair consideration of the general interest, to break the force of transition. I think Parliament has done wisely to take that course, and to abate something from the rigid principles of political economy, for the sake of softening the impact of changes which may be, under particular circumstances, contemplated with alarm, though we do not fear their ultimate effects. But, adopting these principles honestly, boldly, and firmly, we may trust to them to work out their own results; and if now, without further delay, we give our sanction to the principle of freedom of navigation, we may hope that our example will have a powerful effect on foreign countries, because we have already the first fruit of the result in the invitation addressed to us by a great Power on the other side of the Atlantic.

We may hope that when England and America have concurred in setting that example to the world, other nations will be drawn to imitate it by a moral force which it will be difficult to resist; and that we shall live to see the ocean, that great highway of nations, as free to the ships that traverse its bosom, as the winds that sweep it. England will then have achieved another triumph, and made another powerful contribution to the prosperity of mankind.

MR. HUDSON said, if it was necessary for him to offer any apology for rising to address the House on the important subject then before it, it would be found in the fact of his having the honour of representing one of the largest shipping ports in this country. In the port of Sunderland, for which he was Member, out of a population of 70,000 souls, about 25,000 were employed in shipbuilding. He had listened to parts of the speech delivered by the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down with great satisfaction, for he thought the right hon. Gentleman assigned the best possible reasons why they ought to vote for the Amendment of his right hon. Friend the Member for Stamford, rather than with the Government. There was not one proposition submitted to the House by the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Labouchere) with which the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had not found fault; and the right hon. Gentleman had also shown that it would have been much more desirable if by treaties they had paved the way for the adoption of this measure. He hoped, then, that by agreeing to the Amendment, the House would give Ministers an opportunity of carrying out the sound views so ably enforced by the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman, however, had gone on to argue that British shipowners would be able to compete with the Dutch, the Prussians, and other foreigners. From that he entirely dissented. Again, the right hon. Gentleman said, ships might be built at less cost in our colonies than at home; yet our shipbuilders were able to face colonial competition. It was true that ships might be built in the colonies for less money; but the timber was of bad quality and little durability, and this accounted for the fact of our being able to compete with the colonies. This, however, would not be the case when we came to compete with the Baltic shipowners, and encouraged Russia to build ships. He admitted that at present our trade with Russia was carried on by the ships of this country; but it should be recollected, that since machinery was allowed to be exported, British capital had transferred itself to Russia, and that now, instead of sending to Russia cotton fabrics, we sent the Russians raw cotton to manufacture for themselves. He was afraid the same result would attend the shipping trade, and that instead of bringing timber to Sunderland and other ports to build their ships, it would be found that British shipowners had much better transfer their capital and enterprise to the place where the timber existed. He fully agreed with the right hon. Gentleman as to the hardship of maintaining restrictions on the shipowner as to manning his vessels; it was evident that they would not be retained for a moment after the measure passed; if we were to have free trade, let it be carried out fully and fairly; if we were to have protection, let it be protection on a firm and solid basis. From a statement made out by the shipowners of Sunderland, and which he had the honour of submitting to the right hon. Gentleman opposite on a deputation, it was plain that they could not sustain a competition with foreigners, as a shipowner at Sunderland was subject to charges calculated to amount to 2*l.* 10*s.* a ton more than the shipowner of Dantzic, or any other Baltic port, had to encounter. The right hon. Gentleman referred to the reciprocity treaties, and said, that in spite of the ruin denounced from them, the shipping interest was in a state of the greatest prosperity. But this was merely temporary, occasioned by the immense demand for the conveyance of food to this country during the last two years, larger than had ever before been known. From a return of ships entering the port of Sunderland in the course of the last ten years, he found that to ninety-five British vessels coming from the northern ports, there were 350 foreign—some proof that foreigners could compete with us successfully in navigation. He was informed, that as soon as this Bill passed, 20,000 of the labouring people of Sunderland would be thrown out of employ. No man would for a length of time, until he saw the effect of these alterations, commence the building of a new ship. The right hon. Gentleman said, that we must progress, and told the House to look at what had been already done. He must be a bold man to say that his measures had been successful. He would call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to the reduction of the duty on glass. In the town of Sunderland, since the duty had been repealed, an establishment which used to employ 300 or 400 men had reduced the number to 30 or 40, though in Sunderland they possessed advantages for the manufacture of glass almost equal to those of Belgium, labour excepted. He could assure the right hon. Gentleman that the labouring classes in this country were suffering from their measures, and that the result of their freedom of commerce was to deprive the industrious population of this empire of food and employment. What was the present state of our manufacturing districts, and the country in general? It was not such as would warrant any congratulations on its condition. They had not increased but diminished the consumption of their manufactured goods. They would, he thought, have to adopt again the system which they had abandoned. What had they done in the West Indies? Why, the interests of these colonies had been almost totally destroyed. They took away protection, but a Committe of that House had told them that they should retrace their steps, and give protection again. They took the duties off corn, and they would find the agricultural interests hereafter come clamouring to them for relief. By the measure now before the House, if carried, the value of British shipping would be reduced at least 33 per cent. What was to be the result of such a proceeding? For his part he thought they ought to wait to see the consequence of the measures which they passed two years ago, before they passed a measure affecting so deeply another great and important interest in this country. The people were told that former measures would tend to the employment of the poor man. Yet the result had been that his wages were lessened, and his comforts diminished, even where he was fortunate enough to have work. What would be the consequence of the proposed measure but to throw out of employment the 25,000 operatives engaged in shipbuilding in the borough of Sunderland? How did they propose to provide for that population? The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade had been told by the deputation from Sunderland that as soon as that Bill passed, the members of that deputation would cease to build ships. He had himself been authorised to state on the part of persons interested in that subject, that if such a proposal as that before the House were adopted, they had no wish that the coasting trade should be excluded from the operation of the measure, as they considered that such a provision could be of no benefit to them. If the proposal of Her Majesty's Government were agreed to, what right would the Legislature of this country have to insist that British shipowners should retain in their vessels a certain number of British sailors? They would have no more right to take such a course, than they would have to tell British cotton manufacturers and glass manufacturers that they should not employ as many foreigners as they might think proper. That measure, it should be remembered, would destroy a fundamental law of these kingdoms — a national law, the object of which was to maintain here a mercantile marine that would be always ready to act in defence of the country. He concurred with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stamford, that some alterations might be beneficially made in the present system; but that was a very different thing from destroying it—a course which could not fail to be disastrous to the best interests of the country, as being ruinous to the prosperity of our commercial marine. He would ask why should they place the shipowner in competition with the rest of the world, and then put restrictions on him as to the number and description of seamen he should employ? In the speech delivered last night by the late Vice-President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Gibson), that Gentleman seemed to say that commerce was everything—that they should look only to the interests of trade—to the getting of money, and to nothing else. Now, he did not think that that was a principle which the people of this country would recognise. Their great object ought to be to find employment for the poor. Therefore, the question at present before them was, would this measure confer any advantages upon the poor? He had heard with deep regret some things said by Gentlemen opposite derogatory to the character of the British commercial navy. Such things as these sounded distastefully in their ears. They had been accustomed from their earliest days to think and speak with respect and affection of the British navy, and he regretted that aspersions upon that class of men should have come from two Ministers of the Crown. He should have thought that the Treasury bench was the last quarter from which abuse of the navy could have come. The number of captains in the merchant navy was, he believed, about 33,000, and the hon. Gentleman opposite the Member for Westbury had thought it right to attack those men in very strong terms. He had just been appointed to a situation under Government; and the first thing he did was to attack the navy, which had been the glory of this country and the admiration of the world. The country was very much indebted to his hon. Friend (Mr. Henley) for the exposure he last night gave of that blue book which had been laid upon their table; and he must say he was sorry that the right hon. Gentleman had made no allusion to the subject. It would be gratifying to hear what was the real object in getting up that book, if it was not to disparage the fair name of the British navy. The questions sent to the consuls were put in so very offensive and distasteful a manner, that he could scarcely have believed it possible that they proceeded from a British Government. There was no doubt that the object was to disparage the navy, and that book should never have been put on the table of the House. He was sorry it was there, and he hoped that, in future, Gentlemen would be more cautious in traducing the character of the navy. He saw no reason whatever why they should then enter on a dangerous experiment, which might end in the degradation of the country, and deprive her of the empire of the sea which she had so long possessed, not merely for her own benefit, but for the benefit of the whole civilised world. It was all very well for hon. Gentlemen to attempt to enforce abstract principles; but when he heard from able and intelligent men that the effect of the measure would be to induce them to abandon that profession by which they had been able to give employment to thousands, he felt most anxious that the House should not adopt such a proposal. At all events, if they should persevere in their determination to repeal the navigation laws, let them give parties engaged in the shipping trade time to put themselves in a position to meet the difficulties with which they would have to contend after a change of so important a character. He earnestly hoped that the House would pause before it adopted that measure. The principal ground for supporting it was, that they should apply to the shipping interest the same principles of free trade which they had already applied to many other branches of the national industry. But those classes which had been affected by our previous free-trade measures did not ask for a repeal of the navigation laws. The country did not ask for it. No large section whatever of the people asked for it. The right hon. Gentleman who had introduced that measure had pointed out no great and certain advantage which they would derive from its adoption. The right hon. Gentleman had merely held out to them vague expectations of certain benefits which would result from the course which he had recommended. But he would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that on such a subject he ought calmly to reason, rather than to deal in splendid promises. They had been told that Prussia demanded the proposed change. But Prussia was already receiving a good share of our carrying trade, as far at least as regarded the port of Sunderland. To any arrangement by which we should obtain from foreign Powers an equivalent for a relaxation of our system of navigation laws, he could have no objection. He did not, however, think it wise or proper that we should make concessions to other nations, without having ensured to ourselves some corresponding advantage. Such an advantage we had not obtained by the recent repeal of our corn laws. It should be remembered that the new Corn Bill had been passed in a panic, and without calm consideration. He did not deny that public feeling had been in favour of that measure to a great extent. Men of great ability had held out the most magnificent promises with respect to its operation; and the consequence had been that it had been passed hastily at a period of great public excitement. But the question then before the House was one which they might consider more dispassionately. It was not a question connected with the food of the people; it was a question whether the merchant was to receive his goods at a cheaper rate than now, and whether we were to throw out of employment large bodies of the people? Time should, therefore, be taken to negotiate with other countries for advantages in return. Notwithstanding all the benefits which had been conferred on Russia by our changes, that country took no more of our goods than before, and Prussia had not abated a whit her restrictive duties. And now they were asked to adopt this new proposal without regard to the consequences—they were asked to sacrifice the shipping interest of the country to a fanciful idea of political economy—to sacrifice that interest for no possible advantage in return, except to a few importers. He said that they ought not to pass such a measure as that under their consideration, without ascertaining by negotiation what equivalent foreign nations would grant for such a concession. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade appeared, however, to have done nothing to promote that object. He was about to sacrifice the shipping interest to some fanciful principle of political economy; while the measure could be of no advantage to any persons in this country, except a few importers of foreign produce. One of the alleged justifications of the proposal was, that the carrying trade was not conducted as well as it ought to be. But they had received no petitions containing complaints upon that subject, although there were always complainers in the world. The late Member for Inverness (Mr. Morrison) used to complain in that House that the French railways were better managed than the English, although at that very time the carriages on the French lines were only going at the rate of fifteen miles an hour, while those on the English lines were going at the rate of forty miles an hour. This measure ought to have been introduced in February; but here it was in the month of June, and no doubt they would be taunted with unduly obstructing the Bill whenever they showed any opposition to it. He would, nevertheless, take every opportunity to oppose the measure, because he believed it would be injurious to the best interests of the country. At this period of the Session they were called upon to deal with this measure, which involved not merely a commercial but a great national question. The opening of the corn trade, in point of nationality and importance, could not be compared with it. He felt himself called upon to say that he thought this ought to be an open question, and that the Members connected with Government should be left to follow the course they deemed most advisable, especially the gallant Admirals and Officers connected with the naval department. He supposed they would have those gallant Officers voting for this measure; but he should have liked to see it treated as an open question. The shipping interest would have reason to complain that, instead of leaving the matter to be dealt with according to the unbiassed judgment of those Gentlemen, it had been made a Government question, thus making them vote, he would not say contrary to their views, but in a way different perhaps from what otherwise they might have done. If this measure was to pass, he hoped it would do so with the amendments suggested by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Gladstone). The country was not prepared for a measure of this kind. It was either too large or too small. They had taken a course that was objectionable in every way they looked at it. If they did not regard it as a national question, they should have gone further. He hoped, however, the House would not be led away by fanciful free-trade notions. He was satisfied that the effect of such competition as the shipbuilders would be exposed to from this measure, would bring ruin upon all parties who entered upon it. He believed that ships were built cheaper in Sunderland than at any other port; but there would be no possibility of the enterprising builders of that place bearing up against foreign competition. If he was a shipbuilder, he would transfer his whole capital to some place where the timber existed; and he would bring the ships that he might build, laden with produce, to Sunderland, and sell them there at a good profit. In fact, the shipbuilders of this country would have no chance with such ships. For these and many other reasons, he would give his most determined opposition to the measure.

Captain BERKELEY said, the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down stated that if the members of the Board of Admiralty were not connected with the Government, they would, in all probability, give a very different vote from that which he expected they would give; but it was fortunate for him (Captain Berkeley) that he had already on a former occasion parted from his political Friends, because he thought different from them on a vital question connected with the manning of the Navy. He must say that he differed in opinion from a gallant officer (Sir J. Stirling) who had given evidence on the subject, when he said, that the manning of the Royal Navy should be totally distinct and separate from the commercial marine. He differed from him in this view, for he believed that the Royal Navy was dependent on the mercantile navy, and that the mercantile navy was dependent for its existence on the Royal Navy. It had been said, with regard to the apprenticeship system, that they received a great number of merchant apprentices into the Royal Navy. He must say that the advantages were reciprocal; but where there was received one apprentice from the merchant navy, there was made from 20 to 30 per cent more of seamen that went to the merchant service from the Royal Navy. He had been studying these matters all his life, and he thought they should take the most precious care of their seamen, so as to induce them to come into the Navy. Those, however, who looked into these matters must be aware that the long-voyage ships did not furnish to the Royal Navy able seamen, meaning by that term men accustomen to meet difficulties, and accustomed by their energies to overcome them. The reason why they had not so many of these able seamen from the merchant ships as might be expected was this—formerly these ships were rigged by their own ship's company when they went out, and they were unrigged by them on their return. Now, however, when a ship returned from a long voyage, the men were paid off in the river or harbour, and the ships were taken into dock; there they were unrigged, and when about to sail again were rerigged and restowed, and taken out into the stream before the ship's company were engaged. The consequence was, that men from the Royal Navy were sought for by the merchant ships. Take, for example, the first-class boys of a ship, who were nineteen or twenty years of age, and had been four or five years at sea; they were ordinary seamen, and could rig, steer, and do all that was necessary on a voyage out and home. Perhaps they deserted from the Royal Navy, or were paid off; and thus it was that they had not the same number of men coming from the merchant service that they had formerly. He hoped, however, everything would be done to bring seamen from the merchant service to the Royal Navy. About 3,000 apprentices were said to be sailing in the fleet we now employed. He held in his hand a return of the number of boys entered into the Royal Navy for the last eleven years. The boys who entered the Navy amounted to 21,000, of whom about 2,887 were accounted for by desertion, leaving 18,117. Out of that number of 18,117, only 2,947 could be accounted for as rejoining the Royal Navy. But from inquiries he had made, he was able to say that they were to be accounted for in the manner he had stated. They entered the merchant service, they made an outward voyage, they came on their return to a man-of-war, and claimed to enter the service as for the first time, thus passing themselves off as coming from the merchant service, whereas they had been really brought up in the Royal Navy. They had nothing to gain by showing that they had been brought up in the Royal Navy, and it was not fair to set them down as belonging to the merchant service, when in truth they belonged to the Royal Navy. He was glad this system of reciprocity between the Royal Navy and the merchant service did exist. He was thankful for all the merchant seamen whom they got into the service of the Royal Navy; but he did not wish hon. Gentlemen to lay too much stress on this point, supposing that in time of peace so many men could be got from the merchant service. There was another thing to be considered. They employed at this time not less than 20,000 seamen. At the end of the war they would have had no difficulty in getting 100,000 men. He believed there were 60,000 or 70,000 British seamen who were serving in foreign countries, especially in America. When at one time this country was placed in something like a hostile position towards another country, men voluntarily came back to the different ports to take their chance of serving in the Royal Navy. There was a difference in pay between the American Navy and the British. The Admiralty were anxious to raise the character and elevate the moral tone of the Royal Navy. At Portsmouth there were understood to be American agents to entice away the seamen. But of two men, one of whom entered the American service and the other the British, it would be found at the end of four years, taking the same rating for both, that the man who had gone into the American ship would return with very nearly 100*l*. more in his pocket than the man who had gone into the British ship. It was no matter for surprise, therefore, that men should be taken away from the British service; though a great number of them would be brought back again in the event of war. It was said by those who wished to continue the navigation laws, that on repealing them the registration of seamen would be overset. When that registration was proposed, he had thought it in theory a very good measure. But he had taken the greatest pains to watch its working; and he could say that, practically speaking, it was the greatest farce that could be conceived, The registration tickets were obtained by wholesale, and passed backward and forward from one to the other, and in a word the Act was evaded in a thousand ways. Moreover, it was so hateful to the men, that it was driving many of them out of the country. With respect to the general question before the House, having heard the arguments on both sides, and considered the subject well, he had no fear, if the measure proposed by the right hon. Member for Taunton (Mr. Labouchere) were carried, that they would be able to man the Navy fully as well and quite as quickly as they had ever done. If he thought the measure would operate injuriously in that respect, no power in the world should induce him to vote for it.

CAPTAIN HARRIS entirely agreed as to the importance of manning the Navy with the hon. and gallant Member who had just addressed the House, and who had given the best proof of his sincerity in retiring from office when he could not hold it consistently with his opinions. But he would not join him in his condemnation of the registration system, which was most ably conducted by Lieutenant Brown, and afforded not only the machinery for carrying out the most valuable clauses of the Merchant Seamen's Act, but also the resources for putting into practice measures to obviate the necessity of impressment in time of war. For this last purpose it had been established by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Ripon, and it would be madness to abandon it without a fair trial. He did not believe it to be unpopular with the best and steadiest men, who found security in it against oppression; but those, both masters and men, who from motives of self-interest or recklessness were indisposed to conform to the law, raised prejudices against it. The registration of seamen was intended to enable the country to dispense with impressment in time of war. There was a universal wish to do away with impressment, and Parliament was losing valuable time in not providing a substitute. Such a measure ought to originate with the Executive Government; but if none were introduced in the meantime by the noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty, who, he understood, was most anxious on the subject, he should feel it his duty next Session to submit a measure himself. The seafaring population being exempted from militia ballot, might be required by law to serve a number of years in the Navy at the discretion of the Crown, according to the emergency of the case, and after completing their service be entitled to a protection: increase of pension and other advantages might be held out to volunteers. He should urge on the Government the propriety of taking such a measure into consideration before the country should be hurried into war. For in that case what would be the result? They would commence by giving bounties (10*l*. a man), under the Act of the right hon. Member for Ripon; and finding that plan too expensive they would fall back on impressment, and thus have a crew consisting of volunteers, 10*l*. bounty men, and pressed men, which would never answer, even supposing impressment to be practicable. With respect to the manning of the Navy, he had on a former occasion gone into detail to prove that Sir J. Stirling's evidence was erroneous; and both the President of the Board of Trade, and the gallant Officer who spoke last, admitted that the Navy depended mainly on the merchant service for its supply of seamen. But he must express his surprise that the right hon. Member for the University of Oxford (Mr. Gladstone), who had once been President of the Board of Trade, and also Secretary for the Colonies, should have insisted on denationalising the marine of this country. He advocated repealing the law which required that three-fourths of the crew should be British seamen. He (Captain Harris) would ask the right hon. Gentleman under what flag he would sail his motley crew? Strike St. George's cross out of the banner of England, before you hoist it over a foreign-built ship with a foreign crew. Such a scheme would excite universal indignation and discontent. The apprenticeship system had been represented as a great burden on the shipowners; but when they found Mr. Dunbar, a shipowner, expressing his hope to see the day arrive when apprentices would rise to the command of all his ships, they could not believe that the views of the shipowners had been fairly represented. It had been stated that numbers of promising lads sent from workhouses, and apprenticed in the merchant service, worked themselves up in the British service as petty officers and able seamen. With respect to the apprenticeship system, he should suggest a reduction in the scale, but he would not consent to doing away with it, as he believed it to have materially contributed to an improvement in the morals of the great body of seamen. He held returns in his hand to show that one-fifth of the petty officers and able seamen had been apprentices in the merchant service; and he trusted that none of these salutary enactments would be repealed until the free-trade part of the question had been tried, and its effect as to the increase or diminution of the British mercantile marine been fairly tested. As regarded competition in building and sailing ships, the evidence as to the expense was very contradictory; but he had come to the conclusion that in this country they could compete with the American ships. The alteration of the law, however, ought not to be introduced in so sweeping a manner, but it should rather be left to the Crown in the exercise of its discretion to make treaties with foreign Powers. Those countries whose ships could be more cheaply constructed than here, ought to give some reciprocal advantage in a diminution of customs duties. One objection to throwing open the coasting trade was, that foreigners would acquire a degree of skill as pilots round the British shores, such as ought rather to be confined to natives of this country. He trusted that the noble Lord at the head of the Government would not be induced to give way to the right hon. Member for the University of Oxford, and to go beyond the plan he had already proposed, which, in his (Captain Harris's) opinion was of a sufficiently sweeping nature.

SIR A. HOOD said that, connected as his family had been with the British Navy, he would be ashamed of himself if he did not stand forward in defence of the existing navigation laws, and offer his most decided opposition to the resolutions proposed by Her Majesty's Government. Those resolutions were an emanation of free-trade principles; and he looked upon the free-trade measures which had been already adopted, and the measure for altering the navigation laws contemplated by the Government, as Siamese twins. He was convinced that if the intentions of the Government were carried out, the results would be most injurious to the interests of the nation; and he must express his deep regret that free-trade principles had been upheld by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth, who had done so much more for the country than had been effected by the noble Lord opposite and his Colleagues, by diminishing taxation, and consequently increasing the comforts of the poor. The hon. Member for Montrose (Mr. Hume), at a recent county meeting, had instituted a comparison between the expenditure of the noble Lord's Government and that of the Duke of Wellington; and he (Sir A. Hood was glad to find that the comparison was greatly in favour of what was called the Tory Administration. He considered that the changes proposed by the Government would be most injurious to the colonies, and he would, therefore, vote against the reductions.

MR. J. CLAY: Although he would not trespass at great length on the attention of the House, yet he could not confine himself to the two abstract propositions within the limits of which it was the wish of the President of the Board of Trade to narrow this debate, for he could not separate any discussion of this question from the details which the right hon. Gentleman had given to the House some days back. He (Mr. J. Clay) had waited with much anxiety for these details, and had entertained a hope that they might be such as he could entirely support, in the belief that they would advance the general interests of the country, and be, to say the least, not detrimental to those particular interests which the navigation laws had hitherto been supposed to protect. He regretted that the present measure did not, to his mind, fulfil these conditions. As a free-trader, he could not for a moment advocate the protection of one interest at the expense of the rest: nor would he insist that, inasmuch as the commercial marine was the nursery of the Royal Navy, the navigation laws were a price which the whole nation paid for one one of the most important benefits—the national defence. Although he thought this argument was formerly a fair, perhaps a convincing, one, he considered it now no longer available, because the commercial marine only was, and only would be again, a nursery for the Royal Navy, through the means of impressment—a system he held in utter abhorrence, and to which he believed we never could again resort. Hon. Gentlemen opposite admitted that it was only to be justified in cases of extreme necessity. He went further, and declared it impossible. The rights of the poor man in his labour, his only property, were now better understood; and he (Mr. J. Clay) believed that our very women and children would find resistance to the atrocities of a pressgang. He could no longer, then, be satisfied with the well-worn nursery argument, unless he was told by what other means it was proposed, in case war broke out, to retract sailors from the commercial marine for our Royal Navy. The experience of the last war had proved, that to outbid the merchant in wages would be a too costly, if not an impossible operation; and he was of opinion, that the measure before the House ought to have been preceded, or at least accompanied, by a measure finally to set at rest the question of how the Navy was to be manned in case of war. This might be a very easy thing to do, but people did not think so. Many high authorities entertained serious apprehensions on this subject; and the present was not a time when any large class ought to be exposed even to ill-founded apprehension. He would, however, say that in his belief the original intention of the navigation laws never was the protection of a particular class. It was thought expedient, whether rightly or wrongly mattered not, for the sake of creating a preserve for that pressgang which never would go out sporting again, to lay on our shipowers certain burdens, the chief of which were the obligation to carry apprentices, and to sail their ships with a British captain and mate, and three-fourths of a British crew. In return for this service to be rendered to the State, certain carrying privileges were given. What did the present measure propose to do? To sweep away all the privileges, and to retain some of the burdens. To take away all the price, and to leave some of the work to be done for nothing. We were relieved from the necessities of carrying apprentices, but we must still sail our ships with the old proportion of British crew; and if, in a distant port, where no British sailors where to be had, we, from necessity, returned home with a foreign crew, we must still, if obliged, as was probable, to send them back whence we took them—send them back as supernumeraries. This was not his (Mr. J. Clay's) notion of free trade. And what made it more extraordinary, and the injustice more manifest, was, that if we were to believe the Government story and official documents, British sailors were among the least efficient and the most insubordinate to be found; the captains less educated, and the crew more intemperate. So our shipowners, if this story is to be believed, are to be exposed to competition with the whole world, and to be forced to sail with three-fourths of an insubordinate and inefficient crew. But it might be said that all privileges were not swept away—that the coasting trade remained a monopoly. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade at least would not make this answer, for he had admitted that the coasting trade could take care of itself, and therefore wanted no protection. But in this he had understated the case. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford had said that we should even be gainers by exchanging coasting trades with the Americans. He (Mr. J. Clay) was not in the House, and had missed the pleasure he always received from the speeches of that right hon. Gentleman; but he entirely agreed in the opinion expressed, for he knew that it was the opinion of many of the most intelligent shipowners—and he might quote their greatest authority, Mr. G. F. Young—that if we exchanged coasting trades with the Americans, we should see British vessels between Boston and New Orleans, but no Americans between London and Newcastle; and this because the American build was not adapted to our harbours—most of them bar harbours—while our ships were so built that, when out of the foreign trade, they were adapted to the coasting trade. The President of the Board of Trade had said that giving tho protection and privileges of a British register entitled us to ask for a distinctive British feature in the crew. He (Mr. J. Clay) contended that that distinctive feature was found in the British ownership; and he could only see, in this obligation to carry a three-fourths British crew, the lingering idea that our shipowners were to provide for the possible wants of our Royal Navy, and were to do it for nothing. This was not fair. If the nation required a national service from the shipowners, the nation should pay for it. But if our shipowners were to lose all their privileges, then he asked for them the full benefit of free trade, and that they might be allowed to sail their ships with the best and cheapest crew they could find. He would not insist on this if he believed that the removal of the restriction would throw one British sailor out of employ; but he believed no such thing. First of all, he knew that the abuse of the English sailors was not true to anything like the extent alleged. It was true that most foreign captains were subjected to an examination previous to being allowed to exercise their calling. This appeared from the evidence before last year's Committee, and from the work of his hon. Friend the Member for

Stoke-upon-Trent (Mr. Ricardo), a work which—and there was no higher praise—for acuteness and research, was well worthy his distinguished ancestor. He (Mr. J. Clay) knew that there was a prejudice in this country, that a man could not be at the same time brilliant and sound; and the hon. Member for Poole, who shared in this prejudice, had fallen foul of his hon. Friend for writing wittily on so serious a subject. He (Mr. J. Clay) should as soon expect to hear thunder unaccompanied by lightning, as to find a man whom Heaven had gifted with wit reasoning on a subject, however serious, without availing himself of that powerful weapon which he had the good luck to possess. To return from this digression, it appeared that, even in one of our own colonies, in Malta, merchant captains were subjected to an examination, and that, as at our universities, three kinds of degrees were given—a first-class for commanding in the longest voyages; a second-class between the Pillars of Hercules; and even the masters of the small craft between Malta and Gozo, and so forth, must take a sort of nautical "little go." He should be glad to see this examination extended to our captains, with the certainty that they would beat the foreigners hollow; for, even as things were, he had failed to discover the superiority of foreign sailors, captains or crew. And yet he had had some experience, for he had sailed with crews of almost all European nations; and with reference to Malta, he had had a vessel of his own for a year in the Mediterranean, with captain, mate, and crew, all Maltese. He did not recollect what degree his captain had taken; it must at least have been a second class. But he did remember that whenever they were caught in a white squall, his highly educated captain and intelligent crew were on their knees praying to some Maltese saint for that safety which an English sailor would have found in his own courage and energy. His (Mr. J. Clay's) experience was, that if he was to be exposed to the perils of the sea, let it be in a British ship, with a British captain commanding a British crew. He would, however, admit that our sailors, like the rest of us, had their faults. How were they to be mended? Why, was there ever a free-trade debate in which they had not heard of the magic effects of competition on British energy? How often in this debate had they heard of the good effect competition was to have on the shipowners; but how was the boasted stimulant of competition to act for the improvement of our sailors? Whether they were good, bad, or indifferent, our shipowners were forced by law to employ them. Our men were the best stuff in the world; and abundant evidence showed, that when they took service with foreigners, and were forced into competition with foreigners, they commanded the highest wages, and were the best seamen. He asked, then, quite as much in the interest of our sailors themselves as in that of the shipowners, that this restriction should be removed; and he felt confident that both, with fair play, would beat the world. But there were other grievances of which the shipowners had long complained, and to the redress of which they were now at least entitled. He would say nothing about the light-dues as a measure, for their alteration had been announced. But he considered that the duty on marine insurances should now be remitted. He should not trouble the House with details of points to which it would probably be his duty, before long, again to call attention. But there was another vexatious impost, which, although not of so much general interest, yet was cause of much complaint in the borough he had the honour to represent. In 1845 an Act was passed allowing ships' stores to be taken out of bond duty free. Most of the voyages out of the port of Hull were short voyages, and it constantly happened that a very small amount of stores, say from 4*l.* to 6*l.*, was taken. First there was 5*s.* 1*d.* for a bond stamp, then 3*s.* for the officer to follow the stores on board (a whole day's pay for an hour's work), and he believed some small imposition besides, making something like 10 per cent on the amount of stores required, and, *pro tanto*, defeating the beneficial operation of the Act of 1845. He also expected that Government would declare an intention of seriously taking in hand the matter of the charges of foreign brokers. He would not tax the patience of the House, but would refer them on this head to the evidence before a Select Committee on British shipping, in 1844, and particularly to that of Mr. Thomas Thompson, one of the most intelligent and able of the merchants at Hull. They would there find that our ships in many foreign ports were subject to the grossest imposition. Charges the most opposite were lumped together without the items or even vouchers being given; and at Cronstadt our ships paid church money—a heavy charge for Cronstadt, and for St. Petersburg also. If a Russian ship came to Hull, we did not charge her 6*l.* or 7*l.* for Trinity Church, and as much more for York Minster. On this subject Government had been memorialised more than once; and he (Mr. J. Clay) had had the honour of an interview with the noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in consequence of which a circular had been sent to our consuls. The result of this was some increased facility for the detection of the imposition, but none for its remedy. This subject Her Majesty's Ministers must seriously take in hand. If our shipowners were to be started in this race of competition without protection, it behoved Government more than ever to be watchful that our consuls performed the duties they were paid for, and secured to our ships in foreign ports that fair play which foreign ships enjoyed in ours. He would now come to the shipbuilders. He had examined with the closest attention the statements put forth on both sides as to the comparative expense of building ships in this and foreign countries. He did not generally pay great attention to statements of this kind, as he had usually found that figures were much like a Chinese puzzle, and could be thrown into any shape which best suited the purpose of the person who played with them. The statements from the opposing parties in this matter were of the most marvellous discrepancy—the one proving the impossibility, the other the obvious facility, of the English shipbuilder competing with the foreigners. From the best judgment he (Mr. J. Clay) was enabled to form, he was of opinion that the difference was very narrow, and he should not be contented unless we were permitted to build our ships in bond, or at least that every description of timber for shipbuilding purposes should be duty free. If Government would declare that they would make these concessions, or at least that they were prepared to act in this spirit, he should entertain no fears whatever for any of the interests affected, whether those of the shipowner, shipbuilder, or seaman, and would support the Government measure. Many hon. Members had allowed that measures such as he had suggested were required, and had declared their willingness to forward them as soon as the navigation laws were repealed. This did not satisfy him. He wished to see these measures now, or at least to hear them promised. If he had to start a horse for a race, he should like to see him prepared before he went to the post. No one started a horse with the idea of training him afterwards. He must, therefore, suspend his support of the measure proposed by Government until he heard what Her Majesty's Ministers had to say on these subjects. With respect to the two abstract propositions immediately before the House, he could not certainly vote for the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stamford. He (Mr. J. Clay) was quite unprepared to affirm that the "fundamental principles" of the navigation laws were sacred, more particularly when he was told that the restriction to encourage the "long voyage" was one of these principles. He believed this to be one of the most generally approved nuisances of the present system, and peculiarly prejudicial to the port of Hull, where comparatively they had little interest in the long voyage, but whose ships in Baltic ports constantly lost freights through the restriction which prevented them bringing to England goods which had made part of their journey in foreign bottoms. He was quite aware that the opinions he had expressed would find but little sympathy with any party in that House. The free-traders would quarrel with him for not swallowing at once a measure which bore the name of free trade, although to him it appeared to want the reality. The Protectionists would owe him but little favour for an opposition in which they could but in small part concur. If, however, he had satisfied nothing else, he had at least satisfied his own conscience, in stating nothing but his sincere convictions on a subject which he regarded with deep, nay, with fearful anxiety.

Mr. NEWDEGATE apprehended that the compensations held out by the hon. Member (Mr. Clay) to the shipowners were like the Stirling evidence — very short weight. Like that hon. Member, the right hon. Gentleman the representative of Oxford University (Mr. Gladstone) presented to the House the spectacle of a Gentleman thinking one way and voting another. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to feel painfully that, as we had injured the colonists by free trade, we ought for their sake to injure the shipowners. But if the measure before the House had done nothing else, it had gone a long way towards bringing many to their senses; and hon. Members on that (the Opposition) side, who had steadily maintained their principles in the face of agitation and menace, and at the cost of a leader of whom they had good reason to be proud, would, ere long, find their principles acknowledged to be the principles of common sense. Theirs were the principles of common sense. He asked, was not the modification of abstract principles, and their adaptation to the necessities of the community and of the State, the true principles of common sense? He defied any hon. Gentleman to deny the proposition. He would now go into some facts connected with the subject under consideration. The House was asked to abrogate the framework of laws under which our naval supremacy had grown up, on the faith of evidence taken by a one-sided Committee, who never completed their inquiries or reported their opinion to the House. Nor was this the first instance in which great changes had been proposed upon crude, insufficient, and partial information. The Committee on Import Duties, appointed by that House in 1839, reported that the evidence was not sufficiently complete to enable them to offer any suggestion. The Committee was again appointed in 1840. The report was again that the evidence was not yet complete, and they could therefore give no opinion. Nevertheless upon that evidence the free-trade policy was adopted, whose melancholy results they had now to deplore. The Government then proceeded to interfere with the monetary system and banking interests of the country, also on incomplete evidence taken by Committees who stated their inability to furnish a report. And now the House was asked to tamper with the most vital interests of the country, on the evidence of a Committee that did not feel itself competent to report its opinion. He had to complain of the manner in which many hon. Gentlemen opposite had handled the subject. He (Mr. Newdegate) would have thought that commercial, monetary, and financial disasters, consequent upon the crude and hasty legislation of the last few years, might have deterred Her Majesty's Government from further experiments based upon incomplete evidence. But he had especially to complain of the mode in which the hon. Member for Westbury had used statistics in support of his views. The hon. Gentleman ought, for many reasons, to be very careful how he used statistics. But he compared the tonnage of this country in the years 1817 and 1823, with the tonnage in 1846, at the same time that he stated that it was most desirable that adequate averages should be taken. Now, what were the real circumstances of the country between the years 1817 and 1823, as compared with those in 1846? In 1817 a Continental war had just ceased, and our armies were just disbanded. International trade and commerce were just beginning to revive, and competition was opening upon us from abroad. In 1819, Sir Robert Peel's Banking Act was passed; and it produced such a dreadful revolution in trade, that, after enduring a period of depression such as this country had scarcely ever known before, in 1822 the principles of the Act had to be departed from. And those were the years notoriously of depression taken by the hon. Gentleman to compare with the year 1846—the last years of our prosperity, the first year of free trade. Was such a comparison likely to produce a true or a false impression upon the House? No one could doubt. The hon. Member for Westbury stated that in 1817 the tonnage of this country amounted to 2,664,000 tons. In 1823 it had fallen to 2,506,000 tons, being a loss of six per cent upon the tonnage in six years. But what was the decline upon the trade between those two years? In 1817 the foreign exports amounted to 41,761,000*l.* In 1823 they had fallen to 35,458,000*l.* The exports of colonial produce fell in the same period from 10,929,000*l.* in 1817, to 8,603,000*l.* in 1823; being a falling-off in the foreign trade of sixteen per cent, in the colonial of twenty per cent, evidencing the extreme distress which then prevailed. And as shipping was the mere effect of trade, the decrease of our tonnage of only six per cent, while the decrease of our trade was sixteen and twenty per cent, showed that, even during that period of great depression, our shipping suffered far less than our trade from extraneous circumstances, the cause of that depression. He (Mr. Newdegate) said that the selection of such periods at so wide an interval to compare with that of 1846, was an abuse of statistics of which the hon. Member for Westbury should not have been guilty. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford had taken this ground for his argument—he said they should judge of the probable effects of the abolition of the present navigation laws by the effects of Mr. Huskisson's measure; and that the state of the tonnage under Mr. Huskisson's system was the criterion of what might be expected when the laws were abolished under which that amount of tonnage had existed. Now, this appeared to him (Mr. Newdegate) to be an anomaly, for they were asked to infer from the results of reciprocity treaties what would be the effect of giving up all reciprocity. But to judge fairly of the effects of the navigation laws, and of Mr. Huskisson's Reciprocity Act, which was a modification of them, it was necessary to test them by the review of a considerable period; and with the permission of the House he would do so by the following table of the

Tonnage of the United Kingdom and her Colonies.—Averages of the first three years of each Decennial Period, commencing with 1803, the earliest Period given in Mr. Porter's Tables, in which 1814 is taken instead of 1813 in second average, owing to the Records having been destroyed by fire.

1st Period	1803	2,167,883
	1804	2,268,579
	1805	2,283,442
Average		2,239,968

Records for 1813 destroyed by fire.

2nd Period	1814	2,616,965
	1815	2,681,276
	1816	2,783,933
Average		2,694,058

Increase on 1st Period 455,090 tons, or 20 per cent.

3rd Period	1824	2,559,587
	1825	2,553,682
	1826	2,635,644
Average		2,582,971

Increase of tonnage checked, as compared with preceding Period, 1814 to 1816, by the action of the Reciprocity Treaties.

Decrease below 2nd Period 111,087 tons, or 3½ per cent.

4th Period	1834	2,716,100
	1835	2,783,761
	1836	2,792,646
Average		2,764,169

Increase over 3rd Period, 181,198 tons, or 8 per cent.

5th Period	1844	3,637,231
	1845	3,714,061
	1846	3,817,112
Average		3,722,801

Increase over 4th Period, 958,632 tons, or nearly 25 per cent.

He thought that statement must fully satisfy the House that our tonnage had been increasing rapidly during the last few years under our present laws; and now, when shipping was so rapidly increasing, was the time selected by the Government for striking a blow at the whole system. The right hon. Member for Oxford declared he was intent upon more reciprocity, so he would offer the Americans the coasting and long-voyage trades; but he admitted that even if this country gave up the coasting trade, the Americans could not avail themselves of it. The Americans wanted a free trade with our colonies; and in his opinion such an advantage ought not to be conceded to them; but the right hon. Gentleman considered the colonial trade ought to be confined to British shipping: to give up that, went beyond the right hon. Gentleman's ideas of reciprocity. To suppose that we could drive the American liners off the long voyage by opening to them our coasting trade in exchange for theirs, was indeed a wild speculation—to suppose, in any case, that the Americans would not have the best of the bargain—to suppose they would open their coasting trade to us without our opening the colonial trade to them—was expecting far more easy dealing on the part of the Americans, than any experience of that keensighted people justified. Now, were the United States rivals we ought to despise or trifle with? Let them look at the comparative increase of the shipping of America and Great Britain in the years 1815, 1825, 1835, 1845, and 1847. It was—

	British. Tons.	American. Tons.
In 1815	2,681,276	1,368,127
1825	2,553,682	1,423,111
1835	2,783,761	1,824,940
1845	3,714,061	2,839,046
1847	3,952,524	2,831,046

The increase of British shipping, therefore, within the last two years had been 238,462 tons; the increase of American 422,044 tons; the American increase was nearly double the British. If, then, they added the fresh stimulus to American shipping which would be afforded by the proposed alteration of the navigation laws, they would soon find England rivalled by America. Already the American shipping had been increasing at a rate which, if our shipping interest should be depressed by legislative enactments, might soon leave England lagging behind in respect to maritime greatness; and in an official report from the Secretary of the Treasury, addressed to the House of Representatives in Congress, on the 9th of December, 1847, appears the following return:—

Statement showing what the tonnage of the United States would be in 1850, if during each of the ten succeeding years the per centage of augmentation were the same as during the last year:—

	Tons.
1847	2,839,046
1848	3,145,993
1849	3,486,075
1850	3,863,920
1851	4,281,550

An amount exceeding our present tonnage.

If hon. Gentlemen opposite believed Smith's theory to be right, why did they not adopt his opinion when he stated the limits within which the theory of free trade could in his opinion be safely applied to this country? And if they so much reverenced Mr. Huskisson's principles, why did they endeavour to strike from the Statute-book those very laws which he enacted for the benefit of this country? If they adopted the assertion that "this country cannot safely bear a rival in maritime greatness on equal terms," how far less could they expect in safety to see her outstripped? And he (Mr. Newdegate) had shown that, if the Americans progressed in their marine for the years to come as they had in the few years past, the time was near at hand when they would equal this country. It appeared to him that the idea entertained by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, of the manner in which England ought to negotiate with foreigners amounted to this, that the Legislature and the Government were to give up the whole question, and then go and beg on the Continent for reciprocal action, for some return for the sacrifices they had made. He (Mr. Newdegate) knew no better criterion of the value of the navigation laws than the conduct of America, and her position with respect to other countries. The system was that of strict reciprocity. She concluded treaties with other countries on precisely the terms granted by those countries. She held to the old Mosaic principle of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." The Americans dealt with countries, some of which had navigation laws and some had none. He held in his hands a statement of the Austrian Lloyd's, in which the countries were set forth with which America treated on terms of reciprocity; those in which navigation laws were in force; and those in which they were not. Those which had navigation laws were Britain, Holland, Belgium, and Sweden and Norway. And, firstly, of the trade of the British empire with the United States, calculated in dollars; 83,754,552 dollars worth was carried in American vessels, whilst in vessels not American the value was 24,108,184 dollars; thus showing a proportion of 78 per cent in American vessels, and in the vessels of other nations of only 22 per cent; of the trade with Holland, 3,703,761 in American vessels, and 1,491,272 in vessels not American, being a proportion of 73 per cent of American vessels to 27 per cent of vessels belonging to other countries. In order not to detain the House, he would state merely the result per cent with regard to the remaining countries. Of the trade with Belgium 64 per cent was carried in American vessels, and 36 per cent in foreign vessels. Sweden and Norway, who had the advantage of a strong protective system in their favour, showed a proportion of 40 per cent in American vessels, and 60 per cent in vessels of foreign countries, including their own. He now came to countries that had not the advantage of the protection of navigation laws, and he found the result to be still more in favour of America. The trade between Russia and the United States gave a proportion of 90 per cent carried in American vessels, and only 10 per cent carried in other vessels, including those of Russia. Between Denmark and her colonies and the United States, 95 per cent of the trade was carried in United States' vessels, and only 5 per cent in other vessels. With Austria, 84 per cent of the trade was carried in American vessels, and only 16 per cent in the vessels of other countries. He had already stated that America carried 78 per cent of the trade with this country, while only 22 per cent was conveyed in the ships of other nations, including those of Great Britain; and he had also shown the still smaller proportion that nations not having the protection of any navigation laws were able to secure in their commerce with the United States; and, he would ask, was this a country in favour of which still greater facilities should be given? He held in his hand a most remarkable statement which appeared in the *New York Courier and Inquirer* of January 5, 1847, with reference to the commerce of the United States for the year 1846, and he found that it fully corroborated the results which he had just quoted from the Austrian document. It showed that of the whole import trade of the United States, 106,008,173 dollars was imported in American, and 15,683,624 in foreign vessels; or only 12 per cent came in foreign vessels, while 88 per cent was carried in American vessels. Of the export trade, 23,507,483 dollars, or 23 per cent, was carried in foreign vessels; and 78,634,410 dollars, or 77 per cent, in American.

	Dols.
The whole trade amounted to ...	223,833,690
Carried by foreign vessels the value of	29,191,107

Or about 17½ per cent, and American 82½ per cent.

He was anxious, in the next place, to call the attention of the House to the present state of the trade between the United States and the United Kingdom and our colonies, in order to show whether America needed any further stimulus in that direction, or whether she was not already driving a sufficiently large trade with the colonies of this country. The following will show the imports by the United States from England and its possessions in their own and foreign vessels:—

	American Vesssels.	Foreign, including British Vessels.
	Dollars.	Dollars.
From England ...	37,299,036	6,545,124
Scotland ...	735,743	494,343
Ireland ...	12,216	73,558
Gibraltar ...	27,806	
Malta ...	21,589	
British East Indies ...	1,361,345	
Cape of Good Hope ...	81,686	
British Honduras ...	207,997	
Guiana ...	12,561	
Mauritius ...	22,023	
West Indies ...	555,953	833,671
	40,337,955	7,946,703

Thus the Americans imported from the United Kingdom and its possessions 84 per cent in their own vessels, and 16 per cent in foreign.

Exports of the United States in Dollars.

	American. Dollars.	Foreign. Dollars.
To England ...	31,274,643	11,506,976
Scotland ...	887,202	756,128
Ireland ...	1,031,443	45,565
Gibraltar ...	451,882	11,359
Malta ...	33,754	
British East Indies ...	264,145	6,455
Cape of Good Hope ...	23,713	
Mauritius ...	26,356	
Australia ...	48,783	
Honduras ...	325,194	
British Guiana	464,129	87,539
,, West Indies	4,221,598	693,485
,, North American colonies ...	3,536,462	2,506,204
Dols.	42,579,604	15,613,711

The Americans had thus exported to the United Kingdom and its possessions—

74 per cent in their own vessels, and
26 ,, in foreign.

But taking their entire trade with the United Kingdom and its possessions, we find that the whole trade was carried on—

79 per cent by their own vessels, and
21 ,, by foreign, including British.

Thus, though England had a reciprocity treaty with the United States, it was clear that the reciprocity was all on one side; and he would ask whether it was reasonable that, because they were asked to do so by a Power which had so much profited by the treaty that now existed, they should strike down the whole system under which the commerce of this country was encouraged? By the return which he had quoted from the Austrian Lloyd's, it appeared that, taking the whole trade between the United Kingdom and the United States, for the year 1846, no less than 78 per cent was carried in American vessels, and only 22 per cent in vessels other than American; and it was curious to see how nearly the Austrian account tallied with that from the *New York Herald*, proving both essentially accurate. He was afraid that he had wearied the House with these details; but he wished to show that they were not dealing fairly with the question, when they spoke of reciprocity of trade with the United States. He wished in the next place to allude for a moment to the communication that had been made by M. Bunsen to the noble Lord at the head of Foreign Affairs. That communication had been properly described as a threat towards this country. M. Bunsen says, in a note addressed to Lord Palmerston, dated May 10, 1847—

> "The Treaty of 1841 does not allow Prussia, as the aggrieved interests and public opinion in Germany, which powerfully supports those interests, would require, to restrict in an analogous manner the admission of British ships; for the second article of this treaty accords to Great Britain the right of the most favoured nation with respect to the importation of sugar and rice. The expiration of the treaty at the end of the present year will restore that liberty to the Prussian Government, and a change in the laws affecting navigation has been the subject of its serious consideration. The nomination of a Parliamentary Committee to examine the English navigation laws, and to report during the present Session of Parliament thereupon, has nevertheless held out to the Prussian Government a hope that Great Britain will, at no remote period, by means of a general legislative measure, cause the restrictions to disappear which at present weigh upon German navigation and commerce, and which so notori-

ously impede the development of the commercial relations of the two countries."

The only meaning of that communication was —Under the terms of the existing treaty, there were certain restrictions by which the carriage of particular articles, such as sugar and rice, from England to the ports of the Zollverein, were reserved for British vessels; and they were now told, "Yield up those restrictions, or else the Zollverein will increase the restrictive duties on your manufactures." But there was nothing like an offer of a concession in case of Great Britain yielding to this demand. And he would beg to remind them that the Zollverein had constantly acted on its own policy, in direct opposition to the system which was now recommended to the House by Her Majesty's Government. The hon. Member here read, from a return he had moved for, the following list of the recent changes in the Import Duties imposed by the German Commercial Union which affected the principal exports of this country:—

IMPORT DUTIES IMPOSED BY THE COMMERCIAL GERMAN UNION.

Old Duty.			New Duty.			Articles.	Date of Alteration.
£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.		
free			0	1	0	Iron (and Steel), raw .... per cwt. ... imposed	1844...Sept. 1
0	3	0	0	4	6	Iron, pig, rail, &c. .... per cwt. ... raised 50 per cent	1844...Sept. 1
0	9	0	0	18	0	Iron, weighing less than 1 cwt. per cwt. ... raised 100 per cent	1844...Sept. 1
0	3	0	0	9	0	Iron for fellies of locomotives, per cwt. ... raised 200 per cent	1844...Sept. 1
0	9	0	0	7	6	Iron, less than one-half square inch .... per cwt. ... reduced 17 per cent	1846...Sept. 1
0	18	0	0	9	0	Iron, ship chains .... per cwt. ... reduced 100 per cent	1846... Jan. 1
0	9	0	0	12	0	Steel, polished plates .... per cwt. ... raised 25 per cent	1846... Jan. 1
0	9	0	1	10	0	Glass, coloured .... per cwt. ... raised 200 per cent	1846... Jan. 1
0	1	6				Glass, painted .... per cwt. ... raised 2,000 per cent	
						HABERDASHERY AND HARDWARES.	
1	10	0	7	10	0	Ornaments of dress, toilette, &c.; Needles, knitting, &c.; Varnished wares of metal, &c. .... per cwt. ... raised 400 per cent	1846... Jan. 1
1	10	0	15	0	0	Gold and Silver Leaf, imitation .... per cwt. ... raised 1,000 per cent	1846... Jan. 1
3	6	0	0	18	0	Furs, Coverlets, &c. .... per cwt. ... reduced 75 per cent	1846... Jan. 1
8	5	0	16	10	0	Ribbons, silk .... per cwt. ... raised 100 per cent	1846... Jan. 1
						WOOLLEN MANUFACUURES.	
4	10	0	7	10	0	Printed Goods, Shawls, Lace, Embroidery, &c. .... per cwt. ... raised 75 per cent	1846... Jan. 1
						LINEN, NAMELY:—	
0	0	6	0	6	0	Yarn, raw......................... .... raised 1,100 per cent	1847... Jan. 1
0	3	0	0	15	0	Bleached or dyed.............. .... raised 400 per cent	1847... Jan. 1
0	1	6	0	9	0	Boiled with ashes.............. .... raised 500 per cent	1847... Jan. 1
0	6	0	0	12	0	Thread .... raised 100 per cent	1847... Jan. 1
0	6	0	0	12	0	Manufactures, raw .... raised 100 per cent	1848... Jan. 1
1	13	0	3	0	0	Manufactures, bleached, &c. .... raised 90 per cent	1847... Jan. 1
0	6	0	0	9	0	Cotton Twist, unbleached ... . raised 50 per cent	1847... Jan. 1

Now these were changes affecting our exports made of late years in the tariff of the Zollverein; in the councils of which Prussian influence predominated. They were nearly all highly restrictive, and Russia was the Power that came to that House to ask for a relaxation of our restrictive system, and before whom Her Majesty's Government were going to bow down. That was the treatment which was to wring consent from England. Because Prussia menaced us with the rejection of our manufactures from their markets, that House was asked immediately to go the whole length of the concession for which she asked, and, by so doing, to strike down the very system upon which our maritime supremacy was based. Of all the arguments that had been urged in favour of this question, that which grated most upon his feelings was the one urged to the detriment of the character of our shipowners and seamen. The contradictory and *ex parte* character of the documents presented to the House on that subject, had been exposed by his hon. Friend the Member for Oxfordshire (Mr. Henley), whose great characteristic was this, that he had a more innate love and clear conception of that which was due to justice to every man and every class—he (Mr. Newdegate) said it without exception, and without offence—than any Member in that House. He begged to refer the House to one document out of the contradictory pieces of evidence which had been got up for the purpose of making out a case in favour of this proposed change. The Consul at Bremen said that there could be no doubt that the supervision of our seamen was not so regular as that of other nations, and the English Government might take blame upon itself that the means of supervision were relaxed; and the same Consul said that was a sufficient answer to the calumnies that had been uttered against the British shipping interest. He thus emphatically stated his opinion—

> "But there is another reason why British vessels are cried down by British merchants and others, and whereby not only British owners are injured, but shipwrights, ropemakers, chain and anchormakers, and in fact every species of mechanics who gain their livelihood by ship-work are losers, and foreign sailors taught to compete with British.
>
> "I allude to the great and increasing investment of British capital in foreign vessels, in countries where reciprocity treaties exist. It is impossible to state the exact amount, but most of the foreign vessels which trade to America—Austrian, Prussian, Argentine, &c.—are, more or less, in fact sailing for account and risk of British owners, who have, under the pretext of mortgage or otherwise, invested their property in ships under these flags, because they enjoy the same privileges as British vessels, whilst the original cost is much less, and the wages of the men and price of provisions considerably lower.
>
> "These facts are naturally difficult to prove, but there is no doubt of their truth.
>
> "The way of employing their capital being exposed to the view of the Prussians, they naturally follow the path which British enterprise has pointed out to them; and when the British merchants and others cry out against ships sailing under the British flag, and give other flags a higher freight, they are doubtlessly very often influenced by the wish of giving the best freights to ships in which they are themselves privately interested. *Hinc illæ lacryma!*
>
> "British capital is ruining British prosperity. It is the same in all branches. Almost all the machinery by which the Zollverein is rivalling and outdoing England, in the manufacturing line, is English—the best workmen Englishmen; and one may look where one will, British intelligence is undermining British prosperity."

And did the noble Lord at the head of the Government expect that investment of British capital in foreign vessels would be less when the navigation laws were repealed? There could be no doubt that British capital was ruining British prosperity in all the departments of commerce throughout the world. The best workmen of England were carried away to foreign States, and there employed by British capital: thus British intelligence was undermining British prosperity. He contended that, if this measure were passed, greater facilities would be given to the investment of British capital in foreign countries; and he did, therefore, urge upon those who had taken an active part in the agitation against the navigation laws well to consider whether they might not be liable to the imputation of seeking to aggrandise the capital which they already possessed at the expense of England's dearest interests. He begged hon. Members who had manifested the most zeal in this agitation to consider well whether they were pursuing a very patriotic course; whether they were seeking a great legislative change, not for the purposes of advancing the general interests of this empire, but merely of increasing the gains of one class or department, to the injury of the nation at large. He would warn hon. Gentlemen on the Ministerial benches that the great bulk of the people of this country were beginning to look with extreme jealousy upon the motives of those who advocated the free-trade policy. What had the advocates of the Manchester school to tender to the House as an evidence of their success in legislation? Had we not around us distress—almost insurrection? Had we not discontent? Had we not a rising agitation for unconstitutional changes? Had we not a menacing populace? Had we not poverty amongst our merchants? He would ask them, then, with what face came they to the House to urge the Legislature to sanction this further abuse of that theory which they called free trade? They might be democrats; but was not Cromwell a democrat, and yet he founded the navigation laws. Was not Adam Smith a free-trader, and yet he supported them? Was not Mr. Huskisson entitled to be considered a liberal politician; and he stated his belief, that upon the maintenance of the navigation laws depended our national independence. He (Mr. Newdegate) would conclude by asking the noble Lord at the head of the Government to consider seriously whether the measure would bring honour on his grey hairs, and whether generations yet to come would have to thank him, or curse him, for having persevered neglecting all evidence on what he (Lord J. Russell) called the system of progress, and find that this miscalled "progress" ought to have been more appropriately termed the "road to ruin."

MR. WAWN said: The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford has stated that the shipowners of this country do not like reciprocity treaties. The hon. Member for Westbury has quoted the trade with the United States as evidence in their favour; but he omitted to state that the South Sea fishery has been taken from us by the Americans. Denmark has increased her tonnage since 1824 with this country 391 per cent, while our trade has increased only 200 per cent. Sweden and Norway have increased 40 per cent, whilst we have decreased 300 per cent. Prussia has increased 100 per cent: our trade has decreased. And where is the reciprocity in salt? Each successive Government has fallen short of its duty in not getting that grievance redressed. Since the treaty with Russia in 1842 the Russian tonnage has increased 168 per cent, and ours only 58 per cent. The shipowners have good grounds for complaining of the exemption in that treaty in favour of Russian vessels from navigation dues in Russian ports for the first three years. Then there is the Russian Company imposing taxes (I will not say legally) upon British ships. This ought long since to have been abolished; and an assurance ought now to be given to that effect. The British Government committed a great blunder in 1841, when it proposed to the House a duty of 20*s*. per load upon Canadian timber. In proposing to levy that tax upon our colonial timber it made a blunder, as it has made one now, in proposing that ships built in Baltic or other foreign ports should come in duty free, whilst the shipbuilder in this country, building a ship of similar timber, has a duty imposed upon him. Many such blunders I believe there will be before the Government tumbles through. If these resolutions are sanctioned by the House, I trust that the measure which the right hon. Gentleman introduces thereupon will bear its proper title. It should be styled "An Act to encourage shipbuilding in foreign, in preference to British ports." There are two other measures which have been introduced—twin measures, bearing an intimate relation to the present one—which have not yet been printed, although read a first time on Thursday, the 25th of May; but the Government appears to have no desire to proceed with them, until it knows the fate of the present measure. We shall be kept in the dark until that is known; but I have no doubt that if this debate should close at 2 o'clock in the morning in favour of the Ministerial proposition, these two Bills will be printed and circulated with the Votes of to-morrow. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford has argued in favour of admitting the Americans to the coasting trade of this country. You may theorise and philosophise as much as you like upon this question; but it is quite evident that if the Government measure be passed, not only will our colonial shipping be ruined, but even our very coasting trade will be destroyed. What benefits do you expect to reap from the yielding up of our colonial trade to the American shipowners? But notwithstanding all that I or other hon. Members may urge, I know very well that there is a class in this House on whom arguments will have no avail, if opposed to their immediate interests, and who, once they get the wedge in, will be sure to drive it home. And who will get the coasting trade? Certainly not the Americans—but the Danes, Norwegians, and Swedes, whose rivers, for three or four months of the year, are ice-bound, when they cannot employ their vessels; and they, of course, will very gladly avail themselves of the opportunities of commerce which the coasting trade of this country will afford them. They will certainly come here, and destroy our coasting trade. Now that trade has, by the mislegislation of this House, been too much injured already. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Labouchere) might have bestowed some thought upon that trade. Instead of dealing with it as he intends, he ought to have proposed a measure for exempting it from some of its burdens—the light-dues, &c., which amount to more than 5 per cent upon the capital of the vessels employed. And I well tell the right hon. Gentleman why I claim those exemptions on behalf of the coasting trade. It is not merely because I apprehend danger from the Norwegians or the Swedes; the danger is from within; the danger is from what I call an abuse of the Parliamentary powers given to railways. I wish to be distinctly understood. There are certain parties — railway companies or their directors—who come before this

House, and state (not upon oath) to the Committees, that certain tolls ought to be granted by Parliament along certain parts of their line, so as to give the shareholders a sufficient interest to induce them to carry on the undertaking. But how is that privilege used? Is it fairly used? The undertaking for which they obtain Parliamentary sanction is eventually carried along the coasts of the country, so as to absorb the coasting trade. And the better to enable the railway companies to drive the shipping in that trade out of the market, they in some instances carry heavy goods at a halfpenny a ton per mile —levying threepence per mile upon first-class passengers, to make up for the disadvantages to which the proprietors subject themselves, until they succeed in ruining their rivals on the sea. Now, with regard to pilotage. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford states, that he is ready to join in any fair proposition for an alteration of the pilotage laws, as well as the revision of the light-dues. I want to know why the right hon. Gentleman did not manifest the same anxiety to do justice to that subject when he was in office, and when this very question was forced upon his attention. On July 28, 1845, when a report on a Bill affecting the shipping interest was made, I got these words inserted:—

> "That a British ship engaged in foreign trade, and which shall have discharged its cargo at any port in the United Kingdom, shall not be compelled to take a pilot when proceeding in ballast to any other port of the United Kingdom."

Now, as a test of the sincerity of the right hon. Gentleman, I wish to observe that he, with the aid of the right hon. Baronet at the head of the then Government, struck those words out in the next stage of the Bill. I cannot have much faith in an hon. Member who acts so inconsistently—but it may be with an eye for office. Such conduct on the part of one so thoroughly versed in the proceedings of this House, is trifling with this important subject. With regard to one of the other questions before the House—the Merchant Seamen's Fund Bill—I wish to know why it is kept in the dark? Does the Government intend to levy a tax on the shipping interest? I also wish to know if the Government intends to abolish the timber duties, so far as the shipping interest is concerned? I wish to have these questions answered. I oppose the Government scheme, because I think it is fraught with danger. As to the question of impressment, I am old enough to remember the miseries inflicted on seamen and their families by the pressgangs, but will not say that circumstances may not arise which will render the operation of that system necessary. What made us independent of foreigners during the last war? It was not free trade with foreign countries. It was that we had colonies, loyal, wealthy, and powerful, and also an excellent mercantile marine. Was not our mercantile marine at that time a powerful auxiliary? The fact cannot be denied. Every Englishman will feel proud to acknowledge it. I will not longer detain the House, but thank hon. Members for the patience with which they have listened to me.

VISCOUNT INGESTRE, in a debate of such importance, and involving interests of such magnitude, would not have intruded himself upon the attention of the House, but for the connexion which he had with the Navy of this country; and he trusted that circumstance would plead his excuse for the few observations which he was about to offer. The first thing he wished to state was, that in a question of so much magnitude, and involving such mighty interests —involving the maritime supremacy of this country—a supremacy which had lasted for hundreds of years, and which had attained its zenith under the present system —the Government was bound, before they asked the House of Commons to alter the law, to show a case of urgent and permanent necessity for so radical and sweeping a change. But he had not heard a single sentence from any Member of the Government showing the urgency or necessity for such a change, nor, indeed, any just cause for the introduction of the present measure. Hon. Members opposite talked very largely of the defects of the present system. Why did they not point out those defects? They were bound to do so before they asked the Legislature to alter a system which had been identified with the maritime superiority of the country—in other words, with the existence of the country itself. Let those hon. Gentlemen put their fingers upon those defects, and he, for one, would be the first to assist in removing them. But surely it was not necessary, because a patient was ill, that they should give him a medicine which would kill him? He did not purpose to enter into any commercial or statistical details, and would only slightly touch upon the commercial part of the question. He felt it to be his bounden duty to give every resistance he could to a measure which, in his conscience, he believed would be most detrimental to the maritime power of this country. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade said, and no doubt said sincerely, that he would cut off his right hand sooner than that right hand should be instrumental in framing a Bill which was to destroy or injure the maritime power of England. But the right hon. Gentleman had not supported his opinion with facts which brought conviction to his (Viscount Ingestre's) mind. He begged to remind the House that the evidence was incomplete, and that the evidence before the Lords' Committee was not yet finished. Now, he thought this fact of itself ought to induce them to postpone their decision. It was most dangerous to introduce topics which might cause a collision between the two Houses of Parliament; and the least the House of Commons could do would be to wait for the report of the Lords' Committee before they decided upon this question. Much had been said about the evidence of Sir James Stirling before the Committee of the House of Commons last Session; but he (Viscount Ingestre) was of opinion that the experience and the judgment of the great majority of naval officers were contrary to that evidence. He would be sorry to regard this entirely as a commercial question. He did not like to look upon it as one merely of pounds, shillings, and pence. It involved higher considerations; and he felt bound in duty to his country to resist the attempt now made to sacrifice those higher considerations — the dignity, the power, and the high maritime position of Great Britain—to the theory of free trade. And, after all, were their free-trade schemes so successful as to justify them in calling upon Parliament to carry them to a still greater extent? He denied it. What had they seen for the last two or three years—free-trade years? Bankruptcy and ruin. By the operation of their free-trade principles, the money was exported from this country, and great distress and misery had resulted from it. The hon. Member for Westbury (Mr. Wilson) said, they (the Protectionists) were great alarmists when the repeal of the corn laws was proposed. Very well; what then? He (Viscount Ingestre) admitted he was an alarmist then; and, upon the same principle, and in the same manner, he was an alarmist now; nor had he seen anything in the working of a free trade in corn to alter his former views, or to forbid his being an alarmist. He wished to call to the hon. Gentleman's mind that the repeal of the corn laws had not yet been fully tested. Yes, he admitted the fact, as extraordinary and accidental circumstances had raised and kept up the price of corn, and kept the farmers in comparative comfort; but the first good harvest under a different state of things would put the new system to the test, at least as regarded our agriculturists, and their ability to compete with foreigners. Well, then, if they passed from the corn question to the colonial question, what did they find in the position of the colonies to give him cause for exulting in the operation of the free-trade principles? What did they see in the West Indian colonies but bankruptcy and ruin, the result of their unfortunate and misguided legislation? There was a toast which used to be always drank at political dinners in the old-fashioned times, "Ships, Colonies, and Commerce;" but he feared that toast would be honoured no longer, at least by the Gentlemen opposite. The mercantile navy had been long regarded as the nursery and nucleus of our Navy; they were the men who afterwards manned the finest of our vessels, who kept the enemy from our shores, and carried the flag of England throughout over the seas. But it appeared this old-fashioned system was to last no longer. All was to be sacrificed to our pet theory of free trade. They were to expose their fellow-subjects to the competition of the wide world, and their philanthropy was so universal, and so chivalrous, that, in order to benefit all mankind, they would ruin themselves. He was not opposed, but, on the contrary, heartily wished, that a good feeling should exist between nations; but he could not forget the old adage that "charity begins at home;" and that, as other countries have only looked to their own interests, it was their duty not to give up all to benefit strangers. In advocating their free-trade principles, the one class ever alluded to was the consumer. It was very proper to think of the consumer; but why should they quite forget the producer?—at least in this industrious community, where the consumers were for the most part producers. He had presented a petition, signed by 2,800 seamen, masters, and mates of vessels in the port of London; a petition not got up by trick or intrigue, not lying at the corner of a street or upon a bridge, to which all passers by were solicited to sign their names, but a petition emanating from the panic feeling of a large and honest class, who rushed to affix their signatures to it. The petitioners stated that they were loyal subjects of Her Majesty, but that if the navigation laws were repealed, they feared they would be obliged to seek for a livelihood by engaging in the vessels of foreign nations, and that when a war broke out, they might perhaps be then in the service of the enemy. A great deal had been said to the disparagement of British seamen—he thought most erroneously. It surely was most illogical, as well as unfair, to judge of the character of a whole class by a few instances. A few cases of drunken captains, or drunken mates, were pointed out, and then, forsooth, they were called upon to conclude that the whole service was drunken and irregular. It might as well be said, because there was an occasional drunken soldier, or drunken railway guard to be seen, that all railway officials and the whole army were composed of drunkards. His experience of British seamen (and it was considerable) led him to believe that they were, notwithstanding some exceptions, a well-behaved and industrious body of men. He thought the time at which this measure was brought forward most inopportune. When he looked at the state of things on the Continent, the position of foreign politics, and the state of things at home, he could not help saying that, whatever might be the merits of the Government scheme, the moment at which it was brought forward was singularly ill chosen. In the present political state of Europe confidence was placed in British ships; and were we to give up voluntarily, and for no consideration, the advantages to be derived from the state of things? He would not enter into a statement as to the difference in the expense of building ships here and in foreign countries; but he took, as admitted, the broad fact that the expense was much greater, and would be so, so long as we had duties and freights on our timber. That being so, the consequence of the present measure would be, that the capital of our shipowners would shift its allegiance and be employed in foreign parts. The effect of the alteration as regarded freights would be, that the Americans would get all the light goods and profitable freights, and leave to the British shipowner all the heavy freights, such as sugar and goods of that less profitable class. There was another point well worth considering. All the present restrictions were to be retained, and the British merchant would therefore employ foreign ships, because, of course, they would not be subject to British burdens, or compelled to sail with three-fourths of British seamen. He would, therefore, employ foreign ships in time of peace, and in time of war select the ships of some neutral State. He would, then, leave the House to infer where we should find seamen to man our fleets and defend our shores. He considered it was especially the duty of those Members of the Government who were connected with the Admiralty—who had the charge of our maritime defences—to consider seriously what would be the result in this respect. He was no advocate for impressment, but he would show the House a strong case for it. In Lord Campbell's *Life of Lord Loughborough, Lord Chancellor*, vol. vi. p. 127-8, appeared the following remarkable passage:—

> "June 28th, at twenty minutes past twelve, without previous notice, he moved 'for leave to bring in a Bill to suspend all exemptions from impressment into the Navy, together with the right of those impressed to sue out a writ of *habeas corpus* for their liberation.' Will you then continue these impediments, submit to an inferiority at sea, allow your men-of-war to rot in your harbours, and trust the existence of this country to the fate of a battle on shore? So confident does the Government feel in the co-operation of Parliament on this occasion, that I do not scruple to tell you, that the unrestricted impressment which this Bill is to authorise, is begun —that I make this Motion at this late hour, without notice, for the purpose of rendering the measure effectual; and that I hope, by the suspension of Standing Orders, it may to-morrow be carried through all its stages. At one o'clock the Bill was brought in and read a first and second time. The following day it was sent to the Lords, and on the third it received the Royal Assent. The victory of Rodney was the consequence."

Before the Government then carried a measure so vitally affecting our maritime supremacy, it was bound to bring in some substitute for that body from which, though by means of the pressgang, we had hitherto manned our fleet and defended our shores. Sir James Stirling, in his evidence, suggested that he should keep up large peace establishments, for training seamen to man our fleets in time of war; but what would hon. Gentlemen opposite, the economists, who held extreme opinions with respect to a standing Army, say to that? The hon. Member for Westbury had quoted, the other evening, a great decrease in our tonnage between the years 1817 and 1823, as compared with 1844, 1845, 1846; and with respect to that, his hon. Friend the Member for Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) had pointed out a sufficient reason for that decrease in the fact that the country had just emerged from a protracted war, in which large numbers of transports had been employed, and other nations which had been compelled to make use of our ships, were beginning again to employ vessels of their own. It was not, therefore, in any degree attributable to the restrictions then in force. The hon. Member had further quoted a great increase in 1846 in our tonnage; but he forgot to state that in the case of every country where there was a reciprocity treaty, the increase of foreign tonnage had been in a greater proportion than our own. A good deal of stress had been laid upon Mr. Bancroft's letter; but the declaration of the American Minister was somewhat at variance with that of the President. Mr. Bancroft writes—

> "The removal of commercial restrictions, while it would be of mutual advantage to the material interests of both countries, could not but give openings to still further relations of amity between them."

The tariff of the United States of 1846 was highly restrictive, imposing duties on the importation of every article of British production, varying from 10 to 70 per cent. Speaking of this protective tariff, Mr. Polk, in his address to Congress on the opening of the present Session, says, after describing its beneficial effect on American interests—

> "With such gratifying evidences of prosperity, and of the successful operation of the Revenue Act of 1846, every consideration of public policy recommends that it shall remain unchanged. It is hoped that the system of import duties which is established may be regarded as the permanent policy of the country, and that the great interests affected by it may not again be subject to be injuriously disturbed, as they have heretofore been, by frequent and sometimes sudden changes."

Mr. Polk seemed to have a high opinion of the beneficial effect of productive duties. He demanded, therefore, on the part of the industrial classes of this country, that the Government should not hastily make so great a change without proving that there was some imperative reason for it. They had already ruined more than one interest, and that was sufficient, he should imagine, to compel them to be cautious. It had been said that we must retrace our steps; but he was not willing to do that until the people of this country were satisfied that we had been going on in the wrong direction; but he did think we ought to have a little more experience before we pursued those steps any further. He must point out, before he sat down, one fact, and that was, that we were not dealing on equal terms with other countries. We had great colonial possessions, which they had not, and which we must preserve. Strip this country of her home trade—and her home trade he would call it—in the colonies, and what trade was she likely to have? We had raised ourselves, if not in consequence of these laws, with their assistance, to a bright maritime commercial supremacy. Were we lightly to overturn that system under which we had prospered so much, without some imperative reason? He implored the House to pause before it entered upon so fatal a course, or allowed itself to be hurried, with what he must say was indecent haste, to sacrifice a patriotic class of men. He trusted the House would refuse to disturb the capital of the shipowners, so beneficially employed for the weal of the country; and that it would never be made the instrument of injury to that maritime interest which he hoped would still continue superior to that of all other nations.

Lord J. HAY was sure that he should not in vain solicit from the House that indulgence which they never failed to extend to a Member addressing it for the first time, particularly as he intended to confine his observations to those subjects which were more immediately connected with the profession to which he had the honour to belong. His noble Friend (Lord Ingestre), following the example of every hon. Member who had spoken against this measure, had limited his observations principally to the effect which it was calculated to produce on the naval power of this country. He was willing to concede to his noble Friend that the naval power of this and of every other country must depend upon the extent of its commercial prosperity; and if he could believe for one moment that this measure was calculated to destroy the naval power of England, it certainly should not have his support. But he had come to a very different conclusion. He had considered this question in all its bearings, and he firmly believed that it was likely to arouse such an amount of energy and enterprising spirit in this country as would be most calculated to increase its wealth, and secure its naval supremacy. He had the honour twenty years ago, to sit in that House, and it was his fortune to hear now the very same arguments and predictions which were made when the navigation laws were relaxed. It was said that if the British shipowner were brought into competition with the foreigner he must be destroyed, and that the nursery for British seamen must, of course, follow the same fate. But what was the result? By taking the step of relaxing the navigation laws, the amount of British tonnage and the number of British seamen had increased. That, he believed, no hon. Member in that House could deny. It was said that it would be prudent for us to wait until we met with a corresponding liberality from other countries. He held that to be a bad principle. He could not conceive, for one moment, the prudence of denying ourselves the results which must ensue from freedom of trade, because there were people in existence much too stupid to understand it. It had been stated also that the shipping interest of this country was unequal to contend with the ships of other nations—that was to say, that in the building and equipping of British merchant ships they exceeded the cost of other countries. Now, he believed that, to a certain extent, this was true, at least so far as related to a particular quality of ships; but if they took a first-class British ship he was perfectly convinced that she could be built cheaper in the Thames than in any foreign country on the face of the globe. He would take, for instance, the expense of building a ship in the East Indies, and in so doing he would not venture upon the case of a merchant-ship, because he had not inquired particularly into that; but he would take the cost of building as it was found to exist in the Royal naval service. It was true that they would find labour cheaper in the East Indies than in this country; but then one man in England could perform more actual work than five men in Bombay, and the expense of building a line of battle ship in England, as compared with the East Indies, would be as 60,000*l.* to 80,000*l.* He had made particular inquiry into this subject so far as regarded America, and had come to the conclusion that a first-class merchant ship could be built cheaper in England than in the United States; and that the equipment of a ship could be effected 20 per cent cheaper in England than in the United States. The hon. Member for Oxfordshire (Mr. Henley) last night dissected very minutely the evidence contained in the correspondence sent to this country by the British consuls abroad. He had read that evidence, but would not trouble the House with any remarks upon it. He would rather speak from his own personal experience, and he did not hesitate to say that he believed the statements of the consuls to be substantially correct. In 1831 he had the honour to command one of Her Majesty's squadrons off the Douro for several months; and there were, during that time, more than 100 British ships under the protection of the British flag; there was scarcely a morning that he was not called upon to decide a quarrel between a master and the crew of some vessel. He took nearly fifty men out of those ships as volunteers for the Royal Navy; and he did not hesitate to say, that in almost every instance of quarrel the master was wrong and the men were ill used. But he would go further than that. In 1843 he commanded a frigate at New York; and during the time he was there, nine cases of complaint came before him of the bad conduct of persons on board the British merchant ships lying at that port. It was clear to him that all this was the effect of a bad state of discipline on board those ships; and he had never met one man acquainted with these matters, and on whose judgment he could depend, that had not confirmed the opinion he entertained on this subject. Having said this, he did not mean to convey an unfavourable impression of the mercantile marine of this country generally. He was speaking of particular trades, and especially of the ships that were taken up for short voyages, as having an inferior description of men. He knew very well, and he had good reason to know, because he had associated almost daily with some of our most distinguished shipowners, that the Thames, the Clyde, Liverpool, to a certain extent, and Bristol, were exceptions to the rule. Then, as regarded the ability of these men in the management of their ships, he knew that there were not better seamen in the world, but that was not what he complained of; his complaint was of the conduct and moral discipline exhibited in those ships; and he certainly thought that they were not the kind of men who should be in charge of British ships, or who were likely to give encouragement to commercial houses to employ British ships in the way of trade. With regard to the manning of the Navy, he thought Sir J. Stirling, in his evidence before the Committee, had given some very useful hints; but with regard to the numbers of merchant seamen who were received into the Royal Navy, he thought Sir James had overrated them at the present time. Sir James stated them at six per cent; but he would venture to say they did not exceed one or two per cent: he was rather inclined to agree with his gallant Friend (Captain Berkeley) that they were losers by the connexion; as regarded the manning of the fleet, he did not believe that they gained one per cent. By a return presented to that House, it appeared that the number of seamen, first entries, received into the Royal Navy in the eight preceding years was 22,500: this included every description of men—able seamen, ordinary, and landsmen; but he ventured to say that out of that number not more than 4,000 were seamen who had served their apprenticeship in the merchant service. It frequently happened that when a ship was paid off in our naval ports, there was no demand for seamen, that is, no ship fitting out, consequently these discharged men looked to the merchant service for temporary employment. In 1835 no fewer than 3,000 boys were entered. It was found that men were not coming from the merchant service, and it became necessary to raise them for the Royal Navy, independent of the merchant service. That entry was excellent in itself, but it was not afterwards followed out, because it was found that when these young men went abroad, where the captains were restricted from giving higher ratings except in particular circumstances, they naturally became dissatisfied, and most of them when discharged went into the merchant service. He believed, that if they took these different classes of men, they would find that the merchant service was the gainer, and received more from the Royal Navy than it gave. Indeed, he attached no importance whatever to the seamen that they received from the merchant service. But the question was put, how would they man the fleet in the event of war? That question was easily put, and as easily answered. Experience had proved that every step they had taken in the modification of the navigation laws had increased their trade, and in proportion had caused an increase of seamen. He thought it was a fair conclusion to come at, therefore, that this measure was calculated to produce the same result; and that in proportion as they relaxed their present system they would increase the number of seamen; and the naval service would be in the same position as it was formerly, with this difference, that they would have a greater number of men in the market. But the noble Lord asked how they would be got out of the market? Would we impress them? It was scarcely fair to ask that of a professional man; but he might say that if we were to have a war tomorrow, the necessary consequence would be a stoppage of trade to a certain extent. A number of men would thus be thrown out of employment, and therefore a supply for the Navy would more easily be obtained. The inducements to seamen to enter the Royal Navy were much greater now than formerly. Take a seaman on board a man-of-war, explain to him the provision made for him if his health should fail, or if he should be wounded in action, and then he would see that by serving in a ship of war he would be laying up a provision for his old age. The noble Lord had asked what had been got by free-trade measures? He would answer that they had got everything they had ever expected; and he only hoped that the repeal of the navigation laws would prove as successful as the repeal of the corn laws had been. [*Cheers.*] He knew the meaning of those cheers; but he would have hon. Members who cheered know that he took as great an interest in the agricultural question as any hon. Member in that House, and he knew that property had been sold at a higher price, and farms were let for a higher rent now, than they obtained before the repeal of the corn laws was carried.

MR. R. HILDYARD regretted that he felt it his duty to oppose the Government. On those who introduced measures of this description lay the onus of proving the necessity which they said existed for such experiments. He could not but remark that of all the Gentlemen who had spoken on the other side of the House, not one of them had condescended to refer to the fearful amount of injury which would be inflicted on individual interests provided this experiment was made, and should turn out to be a failure. The right hon. Gentleman who had brought forward this question had stated that no less than 40,000,000*l.* of money were embarked in British shipping independently of the vast sums also embarked in other branches of British industry intimately connected with the shipping interest. But how did the Gentlemen opposite speak of that great and important interest? They spoke of them as a specially protected class, and as a body that could well afford to bear a reduction of their profits, should such, unfortunately, be the result of this measure. But there was no greater mistake than to suppose that the money embarked in shipping was in the hands of a few rich men; for he could assure the House, that as regarded the town which he had the honour to represent (Whitehaven), and the case was the same with respect to many other places —nearly every person in it—as well those who were still in business, as those who had retired from trade—had some portion of their capital embarked in shipping; and what, let him ask, was to become of these persons should this experiment fail? With respect, again, to the numbers of working hands employed, and gaining a livelihood by the shipping of this country, it was said to amount to between 230,000 and 240,000. He knew that the time had been when the manufacturers on the opposite side had said, that if workmen engaged in other pursuits were thrown out of employment, they could themselves employ as many of them as could be procured; but, for the last two or three years, had they not had many thousands of men out of work in the manufacturing districts of this country? Seamen were a class whom they all admitted to be a most meritorious one; they were also a class who could only get their livelihood by one occupation. They were unfitted for every other mode of employment except that to which they had been brought up; and if they were thrown out of employment by the operation of these measures, what would become of this enormous body of men, and how were they to be supported? He was assuming now that these measures would fail. With regard to the national question involved in the maintenance of the navigation laws, the noble Lord (Lord J. Hay) had fallen into an inconsistency. He did not deny that the prosperity of the mercantile marine of this country was essential to the efficiency of our naval service; yet the noble Lord dissented from some of the statements of Sir J. Stirling, and he thought that the naval service had the worst of the bargain with the mercantile marine. But, let the noble Lord tell the House what he really did mean. Did he mean that the efficiency of the naval service required the prosperity of our commercial marine or not? They were asked to run an enormous risk in tampering with our commercial marine, if, as he believed, it involved the efficiency of the naval service, to which this country owed its protection. With regard to what they were to do in time of war, the hon. and gallant Officer opposite (Captain Berkeley) had not told them in what way they were to get their sailors, except that many of those who had left the British for the American service would—as he (Mr. Hildyard) trusted would be the case—quit the navy of America, and return to their own, and offer to fight the battles of their own country. He would ask the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite what would be the case with regard to this country, supposing our commercial marine was not only to fail us, but to be transferred to another country? Suppose the commercial marine of America were to be raised at the expense of the commercial marine of this country, it would be impossible to increase the merchant service of America without also increasing her naval force, for the strength of the one was in direct proportion with the prosperity of the other. And as this was an admitted fact, the consequence of course would be that America would compete with us also in the empire of the seas. He did not wish to indulge in gloomy forebodings, but he begged the House to remember that in case of war, hostilities would be conducted in a very different manner. He trusted that the next naval war would be equally glorious as the last; but, no matter how successful we might be, we were not exempt from casualties. Such casualties had attended us in our last war, but we had then our vast commercial marine on which to fall back, capable of supplying us with any number of men who might be required to replace those whom we lost. But what would be our condition in another war, if by sacrificing our commercial marine we deprived our Navy of this important resource. He felt considerable difficulty in speaking on a subject of this sort, without touching upon ground already travelled over; but he would endeavour to avoid repetition, and to be as brief as possible. One of the grounds assigned for the introduction of this measure was that the policy of foreign countries rendered it necessary. In support of this argument, Prussia and America were cited. He did not care whether the intimation of Prussia was intended as a threat or not. Every nation had a perfect right to say, "You ought to pursue such a course, and if you do not we shall be driven to a retaliatory policy." He did not blame any nation for saying thus much, neither did he wish to impute blame to Prussia for having done so; but he asked what chance was there that Prussia would really carry out her threat? He disapproved very much of the vague and premature manner in which the report had gone abroad, that Great Britain intended to make a change in her navigation laws. If the right hon. Gentleman opposite, the President of the Board of Trade, thought proper to make known, as he had stated that he had done in the course of conversation with a casual merchant, the course of policy which the Government intended to take, of course the statement would go much further than was intended. Why, if language of that sort was used, it would quickly find its way to foreign Powers, who would, as a matter of course, use it to their own advantage. The right hon. Gentleman had not acted prudently in thus unequivocally expressing his opinion to a mere stranger; and the loose mode in which official persons had been holding such language was the real secret for the threat on the part of one Power, and the soft invitation on the part of the other. Did any reasonable man believe that Prussia intended to carry that threat into execution? The interests of Prussia would not permit her to do so. What was the amount of British shipping engaged in the commerce between England and Prussia, and what was the amount of Prussian shipping in the year 1847? In the year 1847 the total tonnage of British and Prussian shipping entered inwards and cleared outwards was—

Inwards.	Outwards.
British ... 88,390	British ... 92,947
Prussian... 303,225	Prussian ... 241,892

Thus by carrying her threat into execution, Prussia would inflict on her own shipping nearly four times the injury she inflicted on British shipping. And be it remembered that the Prussian shipping engaged in the direct trade with England, constituted a very large proportion of the whole shipping of the Prussian empire. And would the Prussian landowner consent to be deprived of the British market for his corn, his timber, his hemp, and the other articles of Prussian produce, in order to carry out this threat? Prussia had not done anything to entitle her to concession on the part of Great Britain, for Prussia had entered into a treaty to return perfect reciprocity to our ships; and yet salt, a principal article of back freight from this country, being a Government monopoly in Prussia, was always carried in Prussian bottoms, in open violation of the treaty. In mentioning this, he did not wish to excite angry feeling, but he merely mentioned it to show that we ought to do for ourselves that which Prussia took care to do on her own behalf. Now, let them turn to the "soft impeachment" of America. He was quite ready to admit that the proposition of Mr. Bancroft had been made in perfect good faith; but all did not depend upon Mr. Bancroft. In order to carry out an arrangement of reciprocity, the navigation laws of America would have to be rescinded; and was America keeping pace with us in rescinding the laws which protected her navigation? Was she proposing any measures to go *pari passu* with ours? No! America was standing by, watching till this country should prostrate its own interests at her feet by passing the measure now proposed. It might be said there was a reservation; but how could "the Queen in Council" protect those interests? When Parliament had assented to the alteration, and nothing stood in the way of carrying it into effect but the will of the Sovereign, if the Royal veto were interposed, an angry feeling far more dangerous than the menace of Prussia would grow up; and nothing would be more likely to involve this country in war than the attempt to give effect to such a safeguard as was proposed in the veto of the Sovereign. It would be much more invidious to interpose that veto than to refuse to pass an Act of Parliament reversing the previous policy of this country. The amount of what America said was, "If you give much, we will give much; if you give little, we will give little." But what were we about to give? We were about to give an enormous colonial trade, or at least a participation in it, to America; while America had nothing to give us in return. With respect to the proposed reservation or exception of our coasting trade from the operation of this measure —although on this point he differed from the hon. Member for Shields, who was an authority on such subjects—he still believed that we might safely allow America to interfere in our coasting trade, provided she would keep her word, and give us a share of her coasting trade in return; because, if there was any portion of our commercial marine which could stand competition, especially with America, it was that which was engaged in our coasting trade, which he did not believe America could take away. But was not the American coasting trade a matter of importance to us? The seaboard of America was enormous, and the population of that country was developing itself with enormous rapidity, so that if her coasting trade was not important at the present moment, he was satisfied that in a few years it would be so. Of the present enormous commercial marine of America, how much did hon. Members think was engaged in the coasting trade? Why, within a fraction as much as the whole of the shipping which they had engaged in the foreign trade. He believed, therefore, that the American coasting trade was far more important to us than any detriment which would result to us from throwing open our coasting trade to them. By the present measure, however, we were giving, as usual, the Yankee the best of the bargain. It was said that our colonies had demanded the repeal of the navigation laws, and that in justice we ought to concede it to them. He denied that the colonies had ever made such a demand. They demanded something totally different. They demanded a relaxation of these laws with respect to themselves; but, instead of that, we relaxed them in favour of the whole world; and this, so far from being a boon to the colonies, would be a great disadvantage to them. He thought the opponents of this measure had some reason to complain of the inconsistency of its supporters. One class of its supporters contended that we owed this measure to the colonies; while another class maintained that it would benefit the consumer in this country. Now, both of these arguments could not be sound. The measure could not at once benefit the producer in the colonies and the consumer in this country; for he begged to remind those who spoke of the advantages which the measure would confer on this side of the water, that, according to the arguments of some of their friends, these would be previously disposed of on the other side. With respect to the case of Canada it was argued that if we did not relax our navigation laws, our trade on the St. Lawrence would be transferred to the United States; because, by the American system of drawbacks, that country was rapidly carrying off the trade in question from us. Well, if too much competition had already reduced the profits of navigation on the St. Lawrence, how would the matter be mended by introducing further competition? It was said there was no fear that we could not successfully compete with the foreigner. If this was true —if we could successfully build our vessels, and man our vessels, and victual our vessels, in spite of competition with the foreigner, why was there any exception at all? Any exception was a departure from the great principle they advocated. Why did they except the coasting trade? Why did they require from the British shipowner that three-fourths of his crew should be British seamen? Much had been said on the subject of the reciprocity system. The hon. Member for Westbury had contended that the shipping of this country, engaged in commerce with those countries between which and Great Britain reciprocity treaties existed, had thrived, and thence passed, not very logically, to the conclusion that it must continue to thrive, if we threw open our ports to the shipping of the world, without any stipulations for reciprocal concessions. But had our shipping thrived, in its competition with the shipping of those countries between which and ourselves reciprocity treaties existed? How stood the facts as regarded the carrying trade between this country, and Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Prussia? At the end of the war this trade was mainly in the hands of British shipowners. What was the case now, after twenty-four years' experience of the fruits of reciprocity? The total tonnage of British, and Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, and Prussian shipping entered inwards and cleared outwards in the year 1847, was—

Inwards.		Outwards.	
British ...	118,095	British ...	153,094
Foreign ...	665,600	Foreign ...	743,433

So that out of the enormous carrying trade between these countries, formerly all our own, little more than one sixth part survives to us; and yet the hon. Member for Westbury had the courage to appeal to the results of this reciprocal trade, as a justification of the rash and dangerous proposition of the Government, that this country should throw open its enormous colonial possessions, and our carrying trade with the whole world, without even the poor equivalent of any reciprocal concessions in return. How was this great difference accounted for by Mr. Porter, upon whose shoulders the mantle of the hon. Member for Glasgow seemed to have fallen? When the question was asked in the Lords' Committee, Mr. Porter stated that the explanation was to be found in the fact that British shipping found more profitable employment elsewhere than with those countries with which treaties of reciprocity existed. Now, this proved that such treaties were not so profitable, after all, to the British shipping, as other sources of traffic. With respect to Russia, the treaty of reciprocity had not been in existence so long; but in one single year, whilst our shipping to Russia had increased between one-third and one-fourth, the Russia shipping had increased twofold; and he would remark that Russia had exempted all her own ships for three years from certain duties, to which all other ships were subject. It might be said that, commercially, she was wrong in doing so; and no doubt, as a mere matter of pounds, shillings, and pence, that was true; but she was stimulating her navy—and he believed that Sweden, Norway, and America had done the same. We formerly gave a bounty to shipping engaged in the South Sea fishery, and so long as we did so, that trade was almost exclusively our own. We afterwards withdrew that encouragement—the Americans pursued an opposite policy, and now the South Sea fishery is entirely in their hands. Whether this policy were wise or unwise, it tended at all events to increase the difficulties in the way of British shipping competing successfully with fostered foreign shipping. In conclusion, he begged to make one remark on what had fallen, on the previous evening, from the right hon. Member for Manchester (Mr. Milner Gibson). That right hon. Gentleman said that we had arrived at a new era—that the days of power, and glory, and supremacy, had passed away. ["No, no!"] He would appeal to the recollection of the House, if that was not the substance of what the right hon. Gentleman said. ["No!" *and* "Hear!"] In fact, it was that sentiment which elicited such vociferous cheering from the hon. Gentlemen who surrounded the hon. Member for Manchester. What new era we had arrived at he knew not; but, for his part, he would be content, if it was as great and glorious as the past. And when he heard that sentiment fall from the right hon. Gentleman, he was painfully reminded of the language of one of our most talented and philosophical poets, who, sitting amidst the ruins of the capitol of once the greatest empire in the world, predicted the downfall of this mighty kingdom, from causes, the germ of which were but too distinctly developed in the policy of the party to which the right hon. Gentleman belonged:—

"This is the moral of all earthly tales,
'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past;
First freedom, and then glory; when that fails,
Wealth, vice, corruption—barbarism at last;
And history, with all her volumes vast,
Hath but one page."

He entreated the House to remember the parting words of the hon. Member for Oxfordshire, who never addressed the House without producing a great effect. That hon. Gentleman told them that if it were once taken, they could not retrace this step. *Vestigia nulla retrorsum.* And if they adopted it, they would be involved in complex difficulties from which they never could extricate themselves. They would see their marine, he would not say at once, but gradually, decline, and the naval service of this country impaired; but they would be utterly helpless to arrest the evil, and would have the mortification and remorse of feeling that they had brought about the disastrous result not from any paramount necessity, nor for any equivalent or corresponding benefit for the risk they had incurred.

SIR J. WALSH moved the adjournment of the debate.

After a brief conversation,

The House divided on the question that the debate be now adjourned:—Ayes 236; Noes 73: Majority 163.

List of the AYES.

Abdy, T. N.
Adair, H. E.
Adair, R. A. S.
Adderley, C. B.
Aglionby, H. A.
Alford, Visct.
Anderson, A.
Armstrong, Sir A.
Armstrong, R. B.
Bailey, J., jun.
Baillie, H. J.
Baines, M. T.
Baldock, E. H.
Baldwin, C. B.
Baring, rt. hon. Sir F. T.
Baring, T.
Barrington, Visct.
Bellew, R. M.
Benbow, J.
Bennet, P.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Birch, Sir T. B.
Blake, M. J.
Boldero, H. G.
Bourke, R. S.
Bowles, Adm.
Bowring, Dr.
Boyd, J.
Bremridge, R.
Brotherton, J.
Brown, W.
Bruce, Lord E.
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Buller, C.
Bunbury, W. M.
Cabbell, B. B.
Callaghan, D.
Cardwell, E.
Carew, W. H. P.
Chaplin, W. J.
Childers, J. W.
Christopher, R. A.
Christy, S.
Clements, hon. C. S.
Cerk, rt. hon. Sir G.
Clive, H. B.
Cobbold, J. C.
Cocks, T. S.
Codrington, Sir W.
Coles, H. B.
Colvile, C. R.
Conolly, Col.
Corry, rt. hon. H. L.
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Craig, W. G.
Dashwood, G. H.
Denison, W. J.
Devereux, J. T.
Disraeli, B.
Dod, J. W.
Dodd, G.
Drax, J. S. W. S. E.
Drummond, H.
Duff, G. S.
Duke, Sir J.
Duncombe, hon. A.

Duncuft, J.
Dundas, Adm.
Dunne, F. P.
East, Sir J. B.
Ebrington, Visct.
Evans, J.
Fagan, W.
Farnham, E. B.
Farrer, J.
Fellowes, E.
Filmer, Sir E.
Fitzpatrick, rt. hn. J. W.
Floyer, J.
Foley, J. H. H.
Forbes, W.
Fordyce, A. D.
Forester, hon. G. C. W.
Forster, M.
Fox, W. J.
Freestun, Col.
Fuller, A. E.
Galway, Visct.
Gore, W. R. O.
Granby, Marq. of
Greenall, G.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Grey, R. W.
Grogan, E.
Haggitt, F. R.
Hale, R. B.
Hall, Col.
Hamilton, G. A.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Hardcastle, J. A.
Harris, hon. Capt.
Hastie, A.
Hawes, B.
Hayter, W. G.
Heathcote, Sir W.
Henry, A.
Herbert, H. A.
Herbert, rt. hon. S.
Herries, rt. hon. J. C.
Hervey, Lord A.
Hildyard, R. C.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hill, Lord E.
Hill, Lord M.
Hobhouse, rt. hon. Sir J.
Hobhouse, T. B.
Hodges, T. L.
Hodgson, W. N.
Hollond, R.
Hood, Sir A.
Hope, Sir J.
Hotham, Lord
Howard, hon. E. G. G.
Howard, Sir R.
Hudson, G.
Ingestre, Visct.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Keogh, W.
Kildare, Marq. of
Knox, Col.
Labouchere, rt. hon. H.
Lascelles, hon. W. S.
Lewis, rt. hon. Sir T. F.
Lewis, G. C.
Lincoln, Earl of
Lindsay, hon. Col.
Littleton, hon. E. R.
Lockhart, A. E.
Lockhart, W.
Lowther, hon. Col.
Lushington, C.
Mackenzie, W. F.
M'Cullagh, W. T.
M'Neill, D.
Maher, N. V.
Maitland, T.
Mandeville, Visct.
Martin, C. W.
Martin, S.
Masterman, J.
Matheson, A.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Melgund, Visct.
Miles, P. W. S.
Monsell, W.
Morgan, H. K. G.
Morgan, O.
Morris, D.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Mowatt, F.
Mullings, J. R.
Muntz, G. F.
Newdegate, C. N.
O'Brien, J.
Ogle, S. C. H.
Paget, Lord C.
Paget, Lord G.
Palmer, R.
Palmerston, Visct.
Parker, J.
Pearson, C.
Pechell, Capt.
Pigott, F.
Pilkington, J.
Plowden, W. H. C.
Price, Sir R.
Prime, R.
Raphael, A.
Reid, Col.
Repton, G. W. J.
Rice, E. R.
Richards, R.
Robinson, G. R.
Romilly, Sir J.
Rufford, F.
Russell, Lord J.
Russell, hon. E. S.
Russell, F. F. H.
Rutherfurd, A.
Salwey, Col.
Sandars, G.
Scholefield, W.
Scott, hon. F.
Sheil, rt. hon. R. L.
Shelburne, Earl of
Sibthorp, Col.
Simeon, J.
Smith, J. B.
Smollett, A.
Somerset, Capt.
Somerville, rt. hn. Sir W.
Sotheron, T. H. S.
Spooner, R.
Stafford, A.
Stephenson, R.
Stuart, H.
Stuart, J.
Sutton, J. H. M.
Talfourd, Serj.
Tenison, E. K.
Thicknesse, R. A.
Thompson, Col.
Thompson, Ald.
Thornely, T.
Thornhill, G.
Towneley, C.
Townley, R. G.
Townshend, Capt.
Turner, E.
Turner, G. J.
Tyrell, Sir J. T.
Urquhart, D.
Villiers, Visct.
Villiers, hon. F. W. C.
Vyse, R. H. R. H.
Walter, J.
Ward, H. G.
Watkins, Col.
Westhead, J. P.
Whitmore, T. C.
Williamson, Sir H.
Willoughby, Sir H.
Wilson, J.
Wood, rt. hon. Sir C.
Wyld, J.
Young, Sir J.

TELLERS.
Walsh, Sir J. B.
Henley, J. W.

List of the NOES.

Alcock, T.
Anstey, T. C.
Barkly, H.
Bateson, T.
Bouverie, hon. E. P.
Brand, T.
Brisco, M.
Brockman, E. D.
Bulkeley, Sir R. B. W.
Bunbury, E. H.
Campbell, hon. W. F.
Carter, J. B.
Cavendish, hon. C. C.
Cavendish, W. G.
Chichester, Lord J. L.
Clifford, H. M.
Cockburn, A. J. E.
Cotton, hon. W. H. S.
Crawford, W. S.
Davie, Sir H. R. F.
D'Eyncourt, rt. hon. C.
Duncan, G.
Estcourt, J. B. B.
Fitzwilliam, hon. G. W.
Fortescue, hon. J. W.
Goddard, A. L.
Granger, T. C.
Greene, J.
Grenfell, C. W.
Gwyn, H.
Hallyburton, Lord J. F.
Heneage, G. H. W.
Heywood, J.
Howard, P. H.
Keating, R.
King, hon. P. J. L.
Locke, J.
Mangles, R. D.
Martin, J.
Matheson, Col.
Maxwell, hon. J. P.
Milner, W. M. E.
Mulgrave, Earl of
Noel, hon. G. J.
O'Connell, M. J.
O'Flaherty, A.
Ossulston, Lord
Peto, S. M.
Rendlesham, Lord
Reynolds, J.
Ricardo, J. L.
Ricardo, O.
Robartes, T. J. A.
Sadlier, J.
Scully, F.
Seaham, Visct.
Seymer, H. K.
Shafto, R. D.
Smith, rt. hon. R. V.
Smith, M. T.
Spearman, H. J.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Stanton, W. H.
Sturt, H. G.
Sullivan, M.
Talbot, C. R. M.
Talbot, J. H.
Verner, Sir W.
Waddington, H. S.
Wawn, J. T.
Willcox, B. M.
Williams, J.

TELLERS.
Cochrane, A. D. R. W. B.
Powlett, Lord W.

House adjourned at a quarter past One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, June 5, 1848.

MINUTES.] *Took the Oaths.*—The Viscount Lorton

PUBLIC BILLS.—2ª Protection of Females; Tobago Relief and Immigration into British Guiana and Trinidad; Cruelty to Animals Prevention; Collectors of Cess (Ireland).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Northleach and Newton Abbott, for the Adoption of Measures for the Better Suppression of Vagrancy.—From several Lodges of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (Manchester Unity), for the Extension of the Provisions of the Benefit Societies Act to that Order; and in favour of the Provident Associations Fraud Prevention Bill.—From Rhynie (Aberdeen), for Facilitating the Attainment of Sites for the Scotch Church.—From the Trustees of several Charitable Institutions, praying that they may be relieved from the Legacy Duty on Bequests made to them.—From Bideford, and several other Places, against the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sundays.—From West Redford, for the Discontinuance of Grants of Money to the Temple of Juggernaut, and other Temples, in India.—From Hastings, for the Adoption of Measures for the Suppression of Seduction and Prostitution.—From Liverpool, against any Alteration in the Navigation Laws.

THE IRISH POOR LAW.

LORD MONTEAGLE rose to move for—

"A copy of the Circular of the Poor Law Commissioners of Ireland, dated the 23rd May, 1848, respecting the Administration of Relief to the Families of Parties retaining Possession of Land, contrary to the 10th and 11th Vict., c. 31, s. 10."

He said that he had to complain of the extraordinary discretionary and almost legislative powers which were assumed by the Irish Poor Law Commissioners; and he begged to call the attention of the noble Marquess near him (the Marquess of Lansdowne) to this subject, because, under the recent Act of the Legislature, the Government were responsible for the administration of the poor-law. The Secretary for Ireland in that country, and the noble Marquess and his Colleagues in this country, were responsible to the House and to the public for the due administration of the poor-law. He (Lord Monteagle) wished to call the attention of the Government to an act on the part of the Irish Poor Law Commissioners which required explanation and justification. A provision was introduced in both the English and Irish Poor Law Acts, binding up families together, and making relief to the child relief to the parent, and relief to the wife relief to the husband. After considerable discussion a clause was introduced in the Irish Poor Law Act which provided that relief should not be afforded to any person who held more than a quarter of an acre of land; and, if a person so situated applied for relief, he could only obtain it on the condition of surrendering his holding. He was informed, however, that notwithstanding this express enactment, a circular letter had been addressed by the Irish Poor Law Commissioners to all the boards of guardians in Ireland, instructing them that it would be their duty to give relief to every member of the family of any individual, holding land to any possible extent, who might apply for relief, notwithstanding the refusal of such individual to surrender his land under the provisions of the Act of Parliament. Now, by this circular the Commissioners were setting aside the statute law, and substituting for it their own mere *dictum*, and he thought it was necessary that some explanation should be afforded on the subject.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE had not the least objection to the production of the paper for which the noble Lord had moved; but he begged to state that he had seen the circular to which the noble Lord referred to-day for the first time, and he was therefore unable at present to make any statement as to the grounds on which that circular had been issued. He (the Marquess of Lansdowne) must abstain from expressing any opinion until he had received some information from the Poor Law Commissioners on the subject.

LORD BROUGHAM observed, that probably the opinions of the law officers of the Crown had been taken by the Commissioners; and if that were the case, he would suggest that their opinions should be appended to the return.

LORD CAMPBELL considered that it would be a most objectionable proceeding to require that the opinions of the Crown officers should be produced. If their Lordships called for the production of such opinions as to the construction of an Act of Parliament, they might call for more confidential opinions given by the law officers of the Crown, as to the institution of prosecutions, or matters of that nature.

LORD STANLEY would be glad to know if this most important circular, effecting a great alteration in the operation of the poor-law in Ireland, had been issued with or without the consent of Her Majesty's Ministers? The Government were responsible for the working of the poor-law, and for that alteration also; and he wished to know whether or not the Poor Law Commissioners in Ireland had taken upon themselves to direct such a change in the law, independently of Her Majesty's Ministers?

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE was understood to say that the Government were still ignorant of the reasons which had induced the Commissioners to issue the circular; but that he had no doubt the Secretary for Ireland had given his consent to it, and would be able to state his reasons for doing so.

After some further conversation,

Motion agreed to.

AFFAIRS OF ITALY.

The MARQUESS of LONDONDERRY inquired whether any communications had been received by the Government from Her Majesty's Ministers at Rome, Naples, and Florence, relative to the extraordinary circumstance of the troops of those States having entered the Austrian territories in Italy, and having made war without any violation, as far as was known, on the part of Austria of the arrangements existing under the Treaty of Vienna?

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE could give a very short answer to the question. It was undoubtedly true, as might naturally be expected, that Her Majesty's Ministers abroad had made communications to the Government at home relative to those transactions to which the noble Marquess had alluded; but Her Majesty's Government, not conceiving that there were any existing treaties or obligations which required them directly, imperatively, and forcibly to interfere with respect to those occurrences, certainly did not think that any communication should be made to Parliament on the subject.

THE LATE DISTURBANCES.

LORD BROUGHAM said, he could not but avail himself of the opportunity of again calling the attention of the House to the state of things existing nearer home. The mischief of which he had on a former occasion spoken still continued to prevail. The crying evil still reigned in the metropolis—that it was nightly convulsed by tumults, and by the disorders of a perfect ochlocracy—that the peace of the community was all but broken up and destroyed—and that the tranquillity and rest of Her Majesty's subjects were nightly broken. Alarm was everywhere spread abroad—trade was interfered with, and, above all, the worst possible habits were beginning to be formed among the people—he meant the habit of large bodies of lawless men co-operating and acting together for lawless purposes, to the contempt of the law, while they acquired experience in working together in combined masses—a state of things between which and war there was but a shadow of difference. But, more than this, the most painful state of feeling was beginning to spring up, on the part of the citizens and of the police, towards those who were creating these disturbances. It had been represented to him (and while believing it to be true, he could not wonder at it) that the greatest feeling of exasperation prevailed among the various persons interested in the maintenance of order, against those who were doing their utmost to disturb it. They avowed that their intention was not to expose themselves to any risk, but to keep up these illegal and most unseemly proceedings, until they should have exhausted the police, the special constables, and all but exhausted the military themselves. He did hope that some attention would be paid, and that speedily, to this most important subject.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE was not at all surprised that his noble and learned Friend should again call the attention of the House to this subject. It was one to which the attention of Parliament would naturally be directed until these proceedings of habitual disturbance were put an end to. All he was prepared to say was, that measures had been taken which, in the opinion of the Government, would put an end to them. He had every reason to hope that those measures would be successful; but, if they were not, undoubtedly the attention of Parliament would be called to the subject.

GREAT YARMOUTH FREEMEN DISFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

The EARL of DEVON moved the Second Reading of this Bill, observing that the corrupt proceedings which had been brought to light by inquiries made by the other House of Parliament had led to the introduction of the measure.

The DUKE of RICHMOND suggested that the most effectual means of preventing bribery at elections would be the prosecution by the law officers of the Crown of agents and others who were discovered to be guilty of illegal practices.

LORD BROUGHAM thought that the suspension of the writ in such cases as the present was an improper course to be taken, because the borough was thus left unrepresented, while it was contending for political life or death. At such a juncture it should not be left without representatives, though, if found guilty of corruption, it might be disfranchised for the future.

LORD REDESDALE said, that the course which the noble Lord proposed to pursue appeared to him to be, under the circumstances, free from objection.

Bill read 2^a.

PROTECTION OF FEMALES.

The BISHOP of OXFORD rose to move the Second Reading of a Bill for the Protection of Females. In proceeding with this measure, it would, on the present occasion at least, not be necessary for him to trouble their Lordships at any length. He was quite aware that, in bringing this subject under their notice, a great and painful question might be opened; but he begged it to be distinctly understood, that his present intentions were limited to proceeding through one stage with a measure which was simply intended for purposes of protection. By the Bill which he held in his hand no attempt was made for the suppression of brothels; but it was, on the contrary, intended for the provention of one great evil to which this metropolis and other large cities were exposed; he alluded to the practice of entrapping, by unfair arts, young and unsuspecting females. From the best returns which he could obtain, it did appear that within the metropolis there were as many as 80,000 women who lived by prostitution; and there was every reason to believe that at least one-fourth of that number were brought to the deplorable state of wretchedness and misery in which they were to be found by the arts against which this Bill was directed. It was a fact which admitted of clear and indisputable proof, that many persons made an infamous livelihood by waiting at the different accesses from the country to this great city for the purpose of entrapping unwary young persons; and, under the pretence of procuring them situations, inducing those who arrived without friends or a knowledge of London to accompany them to their abodes of infamy, where, in a condition often of unconsciousness, their ruin was effected, and where violence itself was frequently resorted to in those dark and accursed places. For those evils, if it were at all possible for them to afford a remedy, no time ought to be lost in its application. Whatever differences of opinion might exist as to the practicability of putting down brothels by means of legislation, there could be no doubt that friendless and unsuspecting females were entitled to the protection of the Legislature; and he hoped that a measure might now pass both Houses of Parliament which should go a great length towards saving from prostitution all excepting those who wilfully entered upon that course of life. He felt at the outset, and he was now more than ever convinced of, the difficulty of so framing a measure as that it should meet the evils of the case. Since this Bill had been drawn up, he had himself perceived some defects in it; and one or two friends had kindly pointed out to him other imperfections, so that in its present form he feared that it would be utterly futile; yet, just at present, he was not desirous of proposing any alteration in the Bill, though he had prepared the Amendments which appeared to him to be necessary. What he proposed was, that the Bill should now be read a second time, and then referred to a Select Committee. There would doubtless be some difficulty in proving the words for "their own lucre or gain," as also in defining the word "seduction;" but these and the other difficulties of the case might, he hoped, be surmounted by the labours of a Select Committee. Before he sat down, however, he wished to observe that he proposed, that instead of the county being put to the expense of prosecution, it should be paid by the parties prosecuted. Upon the details of the measure it was not necessary that he should now trouble their Lordships further; but this he would say, without fear of contradiction, that it was the duty of Parliament to make an effort to prevent the great moral destruction that was going on under their eyes. He need not remind their Lordships that it was one essential part of the duty of the Legislature to provide for the avoidance or stoppage of great moral delinquencies. He knew as well as anybody that they could not by Act of Parliament make either men or women moral; but there was a principle of the law which recognised the duty of protecting those who needed protection from the arts of those who sought to make a profit of their unwariness and simplicity. He thought, that any step in this direction would be a great gain; and if a Bill could be framed which would make this abominable traffic more difficult—which might be avoided in many instances; but which would occasionally subject to punishment its violator—if they could effect but this, they would have done a great deal. There was no step, let their Lordships remember, more irretrievable, no step more irremediable, than that which this Bill was intended, in some instances at least, to guard against. The second downward step followed the first by such necessary and immediate sequence, that it was scarcely possible to conceive a destruction more certain than that brought about by the particular crime which this Bill was intended to punish. That crime involved the ruin both of soul and body—it involved a reduction from a state of happiness to such a condition of misery as the mind recoiled from the contemplation of—such a state of physical suffering—of conscious degradation—of utter hopelessness—as but too often to drive its unhappy victims to suicide itself as the only possible method of severing themselves from the courses of wretchedness and guilt in which they had become entangled.

Lord BROUGHAM seconded the Motion that the Bill be then read a second time. Although the measure in its present form required some alterations, yet on the whole it was open to none of those objections that had been successfully urged against other measures of a similar description. Every one must feel that the greatest difficulties beset the path of those who sought to legislate upon subjects of this description; but that formed no reason for opposing the present Bill. He would say to their Lordships, do not reject the Bill as impossible, but rather let it be considered by a Select Committee; for a body so constituted would probably be best qualified to deal with it. The difficulties in its way were great, but not insurmountable; and he ventured to hope that the improved condition of society in the present age would favour their efforts. This improved condition, he could not help saying, was observable not only in the higher morals of these days, but in the better observance of the Sabbath, which, in our Church at least, had of late years become remarkable.

Bill read 2ª.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, June 5, 1848.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—1º Parliamentary Proceedings Adjournment.

2º Appeals on Civil Bills (Dublin).

Petitions Presented. By Sir John Walsh, from Kidderminster, Worcester, for Better Observance of the Lord's Day.—By Mr. G. S. Duff, from the Presbyterian Congregation in Portsoy, and from the Royal Burgh of Banff, in favour of the Places of Worship Sites (Scotland) Bill.—By Mr. J. A. Smyth, from the Governors of the Chichester Infirmary and Dispensary, for Exemption of Charitable Bequests from Legacy Duties.

PARLIAMENTARY OATHS.

Sir R. H. INGLIS said, there was upon the Paper a notice for the introduction of a Bill for altering the oaths taken by Members of Parliament, which would have been important if given merely by a private Member of Parliament—doubly important if given by a Member of the Administration—but which acquired pre-eminent importance when it proceeded from the head of the Government. That notice was entered for a day on which orders of the day had precedence of Motions, and fourteen orders must be disposed of before any Motion could be brought on; and, observing that there was not a single day in the present week that had not preoccupied the attention of the House with some order of the day, he begged to ask the noble Lord, who had added this element of division to the discussions of that House, on what day after the Whitsun holidays he proposed taking the debate, and he trusted the defeat of his new Jew Bill, or, as the noble Lord termed it, the Bill for altering the Oaths taken by Members of Parliament?

Lord J. RUSSELL said, that he had discovered that it was not competent to him to introduce the Bill under the notice which he had given, but that it was necessary to go into a Committee of the whole House on the subject. It was his intention to propose, on Tuesday, the 27th inst., that the House should go into Committee of the whole House for the purpose of considering the oaths taken by Members of the two Houses of Parliament. He begged to remind the hon. Baronet, that in the year before last he stated—and he believed that he repeated the statement last year—that he was in doubt as to whether he should bring in a general Bill with respect to the oaths taken by Members of both Houses of Parliament, or whether he should introduce a Bill limited to the relief of members of the Jewish persuasion. He had tried the latter course; and the hon. Baronet appeared to think that he had sustained a defeat; but he did not think so, because he had been supported by a majority of that House. He now understood that some Members of the other House of Parliament entertained scruples with respect to the oaths which they were called upon to take, and particularly as regarded the oath of supremacy, because they conceived that the Pope had spiritual power in this realm. He, therefore, proposed to make the oaths more simple, in order that all Her Majesty's subjects might be able to take them; and he would call upon the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, for the purpose of considering the subject, on the 27th instant.

Sir R. H. INGLIS said, the noble Lord had stated that his object was to enable all Her Majesty's subjects to take the Parliamentary oaths; now he begged to ask whether in the term "all" the noble Lord included Mahomedans, Pagans, and Jews as well as Christians?

LORD J. RUSSELL answered, that his measure would apply to all Her Majesty's naturalised subjects within the realm; and he was not aware that there were many Mahomedans or Pagans in this country.

DISTURBANCES IN THE TOWER HAMLETS.

MR. THOMPSON rose for the purpose of putting a question to the right hon. Secretary for the Home Department respecting an unhappy conflict which took place yesterday in the Tower Hamlets, between the police and some persons assembled to discuss political matters. He wished to ask the right hon. Baronet whether he had received any official information respecting those proceedings, and whether he was prepared to state on what authority the police, by violence, unprovoked, as he was informed, undertook the dispersion of the persons so assembled? He was informed that those persons who took an active part in the meetings enjoined the people to exercise entire forbearance, and he was further informed that, with respect to a large meeting in Bishop Bonner's Fields at three o'clock, and continued at five, it was commenced, conducted, and ended without the slightest interruption of the public peace—that the people who attended it were quietly returning to their respective homes—and that, after a large number of them had left the field, the police made an unprovoked attack on those who remained, and did considerable injury to many. He did not stand up there for the purpose of affirming or denying the statements made by persons who were on the spot; but, as a conflict had taken place between the police and the people, it was desirable that the House should have the benefit of any official information of which the Secretary for the Home Department might be in possession.

SIR G. GREY said, that if the hon. Member had given him notice of his intention to refer to the subject, he would have brought down to the House the documentary evidence which he possessed respecting the meeting, and which led him to believe that the meeting was one of a very different character from that which the hon. Member attributed to it. As to the authority under which the police were acting, he begged to assume to himself the whole of the responsibility. They were acting under instructions directly given to the commissioners of police by himself, not to allow meetings to be held at unseasonable hours, in consequence of the experience of the last week or ten days, which showed that the invariable result of such meetings was injurious to the inhabitants of the districts in which they took place. It always happened that on the breaking up of these meetings acts of violence to persons and property were committed, against which the inhabitants had a right to look to the Government for protection. They had been assured that protection would be afforded them as far as the law was able to protect them; and he believed that the law would be found completely effectual for that purpose. The meeting in Bishop Bonner's Fields, to which the hon. Gentleman had referred, was not interrupted by the police, becaue it was not held at an unseasonable hour; but immediately the meeting broke up an attack was made on a church in the neighbourhood, where it was supposed there were some troops stationed, and where in fact there was a body of police. Some of the windows were broken, and on the police interfering, in the imperative discharge of their duty to disperse the mob that were thus riotously assembled, a severe conflict took place; but he was happy to say, that the police succeeded in dispersing the rioters, not, however, till thirty of them were seriously injured. One policeman was stabbed through the hand, the blow having been aimed at his breast, and upon several others serious injuries were inflicted. In consequence of the experience which Government had had of the nature of these meetings in different parts of the metropolis, without any plausible pretext for their being held in such vast numbers, he had felt it his duty to direct the police not to allow such meetings to assemble—meetings which had justly created alarm in the minds of the peaceable inhabitants of those districts where these large bodies had congregated, and in which districts many most serious breaches of the peace had occurred. He could assure the House and the public that the most effectual measures would be taken by the Government to prevent the recurrence of these tumultuous assemblages.

MASSACRE AT NAPLES.

MR. MUNTZ wished to ask a question of the noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs in relation to the recent occurrences at Naples. He had received a letter stating that a general feeling prevailed in Naples that the people of England were aiding the Austrian party in Italy, and that the late massacre at Naples had received the sanction of the English Ambassador there. Now, however absurd such a rumour might be, still, as it was credited by some parties in that country, it was desirable that it should receive a decided contradiction from the British Government; he, therefore, begged to ask the noble Lord whether Her Majesty's Government had interfered in favour of the Austrian Government in Italy?

VISCOUNT PALMERSTON: I am very glad that my hon. Friend has put the question, which I will satisfactorily answer in a very few words. Of course I am aware that some most absurd, most false, and most calumnious reports have been circulated in Italy with regard to the conduct of the British Government in the recent events that have occurred in Italy, and with regard to the instructions which have been sent from Her Majesty's Government to the British representative at the Court of Naples. I have, however, great satisfaction in assuring my hon. Friend and the House that there is no foundation whatever for those reports. The British Government, though a party to the Treaty of Vienna, by which the settlement of the Italian States was effected, is not bound by that treaty to interfere in any manner with the events that are now taking place in those States. Although the British Government, as is well known, has been in ancient alliance and on friendly relations with the Emperor of Austria, yet it cannot but feel a lively sympathy in the endeavours —and I hope successful endeavours— which have been lately made in Italy, and by the people of Italy, to obtain for themselves free and constitutional Governments; but the natural and proper position of Her Majesty's Government with regard to the events now passing in those Italian States is, not to interfere in any way whatever. With regard to the events that have recently taken place in Naples, most certainly the reports which Her Majesty's Government have received concerning them induce me to believe that those events have been very much misconceived in their character. I have not yet proposed to lay any papers before the House; but in consequence of what has passed, I undoubtedly will produce the account which has been received of those transactions from Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Naples, to show that he had nothing to do with the events that had taken place, and also to show that the events do not bear the character which has been assigned to them.

NEW WRIT FOR HORSHAM.

MR. GORING said, that as the noble Lord at the head of the Government had not given any decisive answer to the question put to him, as to whether he intended to proceed on Wednesday with the Horsham Election Bill, and as the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department stated the other day, that if the House suspended the writ for boroughs until the Bill brought in by the hon. Member for the Flint boroughs had passed, they would vote for the indefinite suspension of those writs, he now thought it his duty to move that a new writ be issued for the borough of Horsham. He asked for the writ as a right, on behalf of the electors of the borough of Horsham; and he hoped that neither the noble Lord (Lord Lincoln) nor the hon. Member for Montrose would be guilty of so unconstitutional an act as to oppose the issuing of the writ for this borough.

MR. HUME observed, that if he was surprised at the Motion for a new writ for Derby, he was much more astonished at the present Motion, Horsham having been reported against by the Committee on the ground that extensive treating had prevailed there. He hoped the House would not agree to this Motion.

SIR R. PEEL: The view I take with reference to the proceedings which the House should adopt in regard to these boroughs is briefly this:—An Act passed in 1842, making parties guilty of certain acts liable to the penalties of bribery. There were certain usages which had long prevailed, though not thought to partake of the character of corruption, but which this House decided to be corrupt, and at the instance of the noble Lord they proclaimed that these usages should cease, and that if they were continued, the parties who participated in them should be liable to penalties. I am sorry to find that this statute is inoperative. We see that notwithstanding the penalties which it threatens, these acts, these usages, do prevail. There is every reason to believe that the candidates themselves are not cognisant of them; but that it is local committees and local agents who commit these acts, and place the seats of honourable men in jeopardy, by resorting to proceedings for which their principals are held up to discredit. I think the disadvantages of this state of things are manifest. It will be a great discouragement to honourable men to come forward as candidates. They determine to set their faces against these practices, and deny all participation in them; but parties who are their agents commit these acts, and make their principals responsible; and my belief is, that if these practices prevail, and no means be taken to check them, you will have an inferior class of candidates. I therefore was prepared to vote for the suspension of this writ until the House should adopt some new measure for the purpose of making inquiries into these practices. But I think the House ought to bear in mind the particular relation in which it stands towards the constituencies of the country. We may think it right to institute an inquiry; but if the writs are to be suspended while the inquiry is prosecuted, I think we ought to make all other business subordinate to it. It is most dangerous to sanction the practice of suspending writs, particularly in the case of large constituencies such as Cheltenham and Derby, unless we determine to put an end to those practices. I feel it desirable that we should try some new measure, or, at least, that an inquiry should take place preparatory to some new measure being brought in. But while I consent to suspend the writs, I do entreat the noble Lord to consider this as a Government question which has claims for our immediate consideration. The relation in which the House of Commons stands towards the constituencies of the country requires this. I am content, as I gave my vote to suspend the writ for Derby, to vote for the suspension of the writ for Horsham, but with a sense of the manifest evils which result from the suspension of writs, and with a strong feeling that the public interest requires as to make up our minds at once, whether there shall be an inquiry or not.

Lord J. RUSSELL: I quite agree with the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, that while this House proposes to make inquiries into the proceedings at certain elections, and the Borough Elections Bill has been read a second time, it is advisable to suspend the writ for Horsham. At the same time I cannot say I think that a Bill of that nature ought to take place of every other Bill. I quite agree, that if only ordinary business were before the House, it would be quite right to take that Bill before such ordinary business. But when a question of great importance is before the House, whether we shall consider the navigation laws this year, or postpone the consideration of them till next Session; or whether we shall make known in June our intentions with regard to the West Indies, or postpone the declaration of our intentions till July; these are matters of such an important nature as cannot be postponed. Therefore, agreeing in the general principles laid down by the right hon. Gentleman, I cannot give up every other species of legislation for the Borough Elections Bill. I thought the other day that there was some case made out for the borough of Derby by my right hon. Friend near me; and, therefore, I voted for the issuing of the writ; but, in the present instance, no case whatever has been made out, and I think that the House ought to refuse all those writs which may be moved for after boroughs have been reported against by Committees.

Mr. DISRAELI was of opinion, that the logical conclusion to be drawn from the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman and of the noble Lord was, that the House ought to issue this writ. After the speech of the noble Lord, in particular, the House could not hesitate to vote for the Motion. The noble Lord had told the House, without the slightest equivocation, that there was not the least chance of carrying the Borough Elections Bill this year. ["No!"] He had so understood the noble Lord. This being the month of June, and the noble Lord having alluded to two measures which the noble Lord considered of more importance, he would ask the House what prospect there was of any such measure as the Borough Elections Bill being carried this Session? Then the question which the House had now to decide was, whether there was a necessary connexion between inquiry into the proceedings at the election for the borough, and the non-issuing of the writ for Horsham. No doubt it would be most convenient to suspend the writ, and prosecute an early inquiry; but as that was impossible, after the statement made by the noble Lord, the more constitutional course would be to issue the writ now, and pursue the inquiry as early as possible. He ventured to hope that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Tamworth would adopt this view of the case, and vote for the Motion.

Mr. STAFFORD said, when his noble Friend the Member for Sussex (Lord

March) had a Motion similar to the present before the House, he was advised to withdraw his Motion on the ground that it would be better to suspend the writ, as the inconvenience arising from that suspension would be greatly overpaid by the delay. His noble Friend did withdraw his Motion on that advice. That took place in the month of March, and they were now in the month of June; and he would ask the right hon. Gentleman (Sir R. Peel) if there was any ground in the expectation of speedy legislation for further deferring the issue of the writ? Was it possible, after the statement of the noble Lord with reference to his Bill now before the House, to vote for the suspension of the writ in the face of such an assurance? He would ask whether the position of that Bill was creditable to the Government; and he would further ask if the Members of Her Majesty's Government were prepared to vote one way in the case of Derby, and another way in that of Horsham? Did they suppose that the country would under such circumstances give them credit for a wish to promote purity of election? As for the hon. Gentleman the Member for Montrose, it would appear as if the view he had taken of this question must ever prevent him from voting for the issue of the writ. They had heard lately of a meeting having been held in St. James's-square, and of a new party having been formed of which the hon. Member for Montrose was declared the leader, while that very useful and essential functionary in connexion with every party, called a "whipper-in," was announced as having been appointed in the person of Sir Joshua Walmsley. A list of the adherents of this party was published; but from more than one quarter came the intimation that that list was an incorrect one. The question was one of growing importance, whether they should continue their inquiries, or issue the writs now suspended in the case of several boroughs; and he would remind the House that those cases could not be classed under one category without the most shameless injustice. He would tender his vote for the issuing of the writ, because he maintained that not one single case had been made out to disfranchise the borough of Horsham, and because he firmly believed that those who had stifled inquiry, and those most guilty, were not the most prominent in that case.

Mr. GORING replied: The public would not fail to see that the Government voted for the issuing of a writ for Derby, where bribery was proved, and opposed it in the case of Horsham, where no bribery was proved. The public would also take notice that Derby had returned two Whig Members for the last twenty years, and that that was the reason why the writ had been issued in the case of that borough, but that because the Member likely to be returned for Horsham would be unfavourable to Government, therefore they opposed the issue of the writ. An hon. Member had talked about reports of great corruption at Horsham being in circulation. One report was that the learned Attorney General was deeply implicated in the bribery, if any did take place, at Horsham; and if the Bill of the noble Lord was not proceeded with on Wednesday, it would greatly strengthen those reports. He must say he was not surprised at the opposition of the hon. Member for Montrose, as he always considered the principles of that hon. Member were at variance with the best principles of the British constitution. He was always very liberal; but when a practical question like the present was brought forward, the despotic spirit of the spurious Liberal showed itself in its true light. It was one of the best principles of the British constitution to consider a man innocent till he was proved guilty; but the hon. Member both convicted and condemned the voters of Horsham without proof, and would deprive them of their privileges. The country might, by this, see what a tyrannous course that hon. Gentleman would pursue if he succeeded in carrying his views and upsetting the institutions of the country.

House divided:—Ayes 117; Noes 231: Majority 114.

List of the Ayes.

Adderley, C. B.
Anstey, T. C.
Archdall, Capt.
Bailey, J.
Baillie, H. J.
Baldock, E. H.
Bankes, G.
Baring, T.
Barrington, Visct.
Benbow, J.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Bentinck, Lord H.
Beresford, W.
Blackall, S. W.
Blandford, Marq. of
Bolling, W.
Bourke, R. S.
Bowles, Adm.
Boyd, J.
Bramston, T. W.
Bremridge, R.
Bruce, C. L. C.
Buck, L. W.
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Burrell, Sir C. M.
Chichester, Lord J. L.
Christopher, R. A.
Cobbold, J. C.
Cocks, T. S.
Colvile, C. R.
Damer, hon. Col.
Deedes, W.
Disraeli, B.
Drummond, H.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Dundas, G.
Du Pre, C. G.
East, Sir J. B.
Euston, Earl of
Farnham, E. B.
Farrer, J.
Floyer, J.

Forbes, W.
Fox, S. W. L.
Fuller, A. E.
Galway, Visct.
Godson, R.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Greene, T.
Grogan, E.
Hale, R. B.
Hall, Col.
Hamilton, G. A.
Harris, hon. Capt.
Henley, J. W.
Herries, rt. hon. J. C.
Hodgson, W. N.
Hogg, Sir J. W.
Hope, Sir J.
Hornby, J.
Houldsworth, T.
Ingestre, Visct.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Jones, Capt.
Keogh, W.
Kerrison, Sir E.
Knox, Col.
Lascelles, hon. E.
Law, hon. C. E.
Lennox, Lord H. G.
Lowther, hon. Col.
Lygon, hon. Gen.
Mackenzie, W. F.
Mahon, Visct.
Mandeville, Visct.
Manners, Lord G.
Meux, Sir H.
Miles, W.
Mullings, J. R.
Mure, Col.
Neeld, J.
Newdegate, C. N.
Newport, Visct.
Noel, hon. G. J.
O'Brien, Sir L.
O'Connell, M. J.
Oswald, A.
Peel, Col.
Powlett, Lord W.
Reid, Col.
Repton, G. W. J.
Robinson, G. R.
Rushout, Capt.
Scott, hon. F.
Seaham, Visct.
Seymer, H. K.
Shirley, E. J.
Sibthorp, Col.
Sidney, Ald.
Sotheron, T. H. S.
Spooner, R.
Stanley, E.
Stuart, J.
Taylor, T. E.
Thompson, Ald.
Thornhill, G.
Tollemache, hon. J. F.
Trollope, Sir J.
Tyrell, Sir J. T.
Urquhart, D.
Vyvyan, Sir R. R.
Vyse, R. H. R. H.
Wadington, H. S.
Walsh, Sir J. B.
Welby, G. E.
Willoughby, Sir H.
Wodehouse, E.

TELLERS.

Goring, C.
Stafford, A.

List of the NOES.

Acland, Sir T. D.
Adair, H. E.
Adair, R. A. S.
Aglionby, H. A.
Anson, hon. Col.
Armstrong, Sir A.
Armstrong, R. B.
Ashley, Lord
Baines, M. T.
Baring, rt. hon. Sir F. T.
Barnard, E. G.
Bellew, R. M.
Benett, J.
Berkeley, hon. G. F.
Bernal, R.
Birch, Sir T. B.
Blackstone, W. S.
Blake, M. J.
Bowring, Dr.
Boyle, hon. Col.
Brackley, Visct.
Brand, T.
Bright, J.
Brotherton, J.
Brown, W.
Bulkeley, Sir R. B. W.
Bunbury, E. H.
Burke, Sir T. J.
Buxton, Sir E. N.
Callaghan, D.
Campbell, hon. W. F.
Cardwell, E.
Carter, J. B.
Caulfeild, J. M.
Cavendish, hon. C. C.
Cavendish, hon. G. H.
Cayley, E. S.
Charteris, hon. F.
Childers, J. W.
Cholmeley, Sir M.
Clay, J.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.
Clifford, H. M.
Cobden, R.
Cochrane, A. D. R. W. B.
Cockburn, A. J. E.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Corbally, M. E.
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Craig, W. G.
Currie, H.
Dalrymple, Capt.
Davie, Sir H. R. F.
Dawson, hon. T. V.
Denison, W. J.
Devereux, J. T.
D'Eyncourt, rt. hon. C. T.
Divett, E.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Drumlanrig, Visct.
Drummond, H. H.
Duncan, G.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Duncuft, J.
Dundas, Adm.
Dunne, F. P.
Ebrington, Visct.
Egerton, W. T.
Ellice, rt. hon. E.
Elliot, hon. J. E.
Estcourt, J. B. B.
Evans, Sir De L.
Evans, J.
Evans, W.
Ewart, W.
Fagan, W.
Fellowes, E.
Fergus, J.
Fitzroy, hon. H.
Fitzwilliam, hon. G. W.
Fortescue, C.
Fortescue, hon. J. W.
Fox, W. J.
Gibson, rt. hon. T. M.
Gladstone, rt. hon. W. E.
Glyn, G. C.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Granger, T. C.
Grattan, H.
Greenall, G.
Greene, J.
Grenfell, C. P.
Grey, R. W.
Grosvenor, Lord R.
Guest, Sir J.
Halford, Sir H.
Hallyburton, Lord J. F.
Hastie, A.
Hastie, A.
Hawes, B.
Hay, Lord J.
Hayes, Sir E.
Hayter, W. G.
Headlam, T. E.
Heathcoat, J.
Heneage, E.
Herbert, rt. hon. S.
Hervey, Lord A.
Heywood, J.
Hill, Lord M.
Hodges, T. L.
Hood, Sir A.
Horsman, E.
Howard, hon. C. W. G.
Howard, hon. E. G. G.
Humphery, Ald.
Johnstone, Sir J.
Keating, R.
Keppel, hon. G. T.
Kershaw, J.
Kildare, Marq. of
King, hon. P. J. L.
Langston, J. H.
Lascelles, hon. W. S.
Lemon, Sir C.
Lewis, rt. hon. Sir T. F.
Lewis, G. C.
Lincoln, Earl of
Lindsay, hon. Col.
Littleton, hon. E. R.
Loch, J.
Locke, J.
Lockhart, A. E.
Lushington, C.
Macnamara, Maj.
M'Cullagh, W. T.
M'Gregor, J.
M'Taggart, Sir J.
Mahon, The O'Gorman
Maitland, T.
Mangles, R. D.
Marshall, J. G.
Marshall, W.
Martin, J.
Matheson, A.
Matheson, Col.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Milnes, R. M.
Mitchell, T. A.
Moffatt, G.
Morgan, H. K. G.
Morris, D.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Mowatt, F.
Mulgrave, Earl of
Muntz, G. F.
Norreys, Lord
Norreys, Sir D. J.
Nugent, Lord
O'Brien, J.
O'Brien, T.
O'Flaherty, A.
Ogle, S. C. H.
Packe, C. W.
Paget, Lord C.
Pakington, Sir J.
Palmerston, Visct.
Parker, J.
Patten, J. W.
Pattison, J.
Pearson, C.
Pechell, Capt.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Pendarves, E. W. W.
Perfect, R.
Pilkington, J.
Power, Dr.
Pusey, P.
Raphael, A.
Rawdon, Col.
Ricardo, J. L.
Ricardo, O.
Rice, E. R.
Rich, H.
Richards, R.
Robartes, T. J. A.
Roche, E. B.
Romilly, Sir J.
Russell, Lord J.
Russell, F. C. H.
Rutherfurd, A.
Sadlier, J.
Salwey, Col.
Sandars, G.
Sholefield, W.
Sheil, rt. hon. R. L.
Simeon, J.
Smith, rt. hon. R. V.
Smith, J. A.
Smith, J. B.
Somerville, rt. hn. Sir W.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Stanton, W. H.
Strickland, Sir G.
Stuart, Lord J.
Sullivan, M.
Talbot, C. R. M.
Tancred, H. W.
Tenison, E. K.
Thicknesse, R. A.

Thompson, Col.
Towneley, C.
Towneley, J.
Townley, R. G.
Trelawny, J. S.
Turner, E.
Vane, Lord H.
Verney, Sir H.
Villiers, hon. C.
Vivian, J. H.
Ward, H. G.
Watkins, Col.
Westhead, J. P.
Wilcox, B. M.
Williams, J.
Williamson, Sir H.
Wilson, J.
Wood, W. P.
Wrightson, W. B.
Wyvill, M.
Young, Sir J.

TELLERS.

Hume, J.
Hanmer, Sir J.

EXPULSION OF THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR FROM MADRID.

On the Motion that the Speaker do leave the chair, for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of Supply,

MR. BANKES rose to propose the following Resolution, of which he had given notice:—

> "That this House learns with deep regret, from a Correspondence between the British Government and the Government of Spain, now upon the Table of this House, that a proposed interference with the internal concerns of the Spanish Government, as conducted under the authority and with the entire approval of Her Majesty's Ministers, has placed the British Government and our Representative at the Court of Madrid, in a position humiliating in its character, and which is calculated to affect the friendly relations heretofore existing between the Courts of Great Britain and of Spain."

Among all the singular events which had distinguished the past year, it had not been the least singular one, that a British Minister had been for the first time expelled from a friendly foreign country, and had been ordered to quit the Court to which he had been accredited by the British Government within a very limited time. It did not diminish the singularity of this event, when he observed the manner in which the news of it had been received by Her Majesty's Government—the complaisant and quiet tranquillity with which they regarded an event of so extraordinary a character. The proceeding was totally unexpected by them; for a day or two before it occurred, upon a question being put to them from that side of the House, they said, that notwithstanding any transactions which had taken place, the foreign relations between the two Courts were in no degree disturbed. But for a question put in that House to the noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, it appeared as if the Government would not have thought it necessary to make any communication to the House upon the subject; and they would probably have heard of it for the first time, as they had recently learned many things concerning foreign diplomacy, by reading a relation of the transactions in some foreign newspaper. It was very surprising that Her Majesty's Ministers should receive information of such a transaction with such complaisance and tranquillity; and it was really astonishing to him, that up to that time no Member of Her Majesty's Government had thought fit to give any explanation upon the matter to those anxious for the maintenance of the honour and character of the country; and that it should be left to an individual Member unconnected with the Government, and sitting upon the Opposition benches, to call upon Her Majesty's Government for some explanation of these extraordinary events. There was reason to suppose, however, that some explanation might have taken place elsewhere. He was aware it was contrary to the order of that House to allude to the business transacted elsewhere; but he had seen in the columns of some foreign newspapers, allusions and references made to debates said to have occurred in another place; and with reference to the explanation then given, it was alleged the Spanish Government had complained of their unfairness. The Spanish Minister was greatly mistaken if he supposed that an outrage on the person of our Ambassador, or an injury of this description, would be regarded as of a trifling character by the people of this country; but it would appear as if an injury of this character was disregarded by the Ministers of the Crown, who allowed the proceeding to pass over with silence in that House until information respecting it was obtained by means of a casual answer to a question, which question was only incidentally put. Was an explanation of this grave transaction thus to be conveyed? He should have thought that the noble Lord would have supposed that a debate upon a business of this kind had been too long delayed, and would have declared that the matter was of so serious a nature that it could not be brought forward at too early a period. He therefore could not complain that it was now brought forward by him, as well for the character of the empire which he represented, as for the purpose of setting right the Spanish Court in the extraordinary proceedings they had adopted. He might then tell the Spanish Government that the House and the country were prepared to go with him in the vindication of the honour of the country; but to do so they must receive full explanation upon the subject. In demanding such satisfaction from the Spanish Government, however, they would be better qualified to do so if they admitted that errors had been committed upon their own side; and the mode in which they had been committed had probably led to the subsequent transactions. The question was, whether the grounds assumed in these papers were well founded, and whether we were justified in urging them. It was essential that we should know this; and he could conceive no ground for concealment with reference to this matter. It was impossible the noble Lord could be ignorant of these transactions: for, on the one hand, the Ambassador himself was in this town in communication with the noble Lord; and, upon the other hand, a special envoy from the Court of Spain had arrived here, with whom, however, the noble Lord declined to communicate, but from whom he might, if he thought fit, receive communications through the Spanish Ambassador. This was another unfortunate piece of diplomacy on the part of the noble Lord at the head of Foreign Affairs; for by the steps he had taken he had brought about that unhappy state of things which no man in that House could justify. He might lament, and he did lament, the instructions given to our Ambassador, which, when carried into effect, might lead to events so humiliating to us as those which had occurred in the Court to which this Ambassador had been accredited. The noble Lord had justified the Ambassador for having done what he did. He had gone to an extent which was very far indeed; but the Spanish Government went one step further, and resorted to a measure which he most deeply regretted, in ordering our Ambassador to leave their Court within eight-and-forty hours. When this matter first received the attention of the House, the question was confined to the instructions issued by the noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and that was considered a matter of great weight and grave concern; above all, when the reply of the Duke de Sotomayor had been received. When he read the letter of the noble Lord—and he knew great numbers entertained the same opinion as himself—he had no doubt as to its impropriety. The only opinion he could form of it was, that it was a proposed interference with the internal concerns of a foreign allied nation, which no nation could bear without resentment. He had anticipated many evil consequences which would arise from such interference with nations in friendly relations with us. That nation had long been attached to us by friendly relations of an historical character, and which they, as well as ourselves, must always regard with feelings of pride and honour. It might be true that Spain owed us a debt of gratitude for the aid we lent her during her war of liberation, in which we so heartily engaged; yet he could not but feel that if Spain derived benefit from our assistance in her war of independence, we also had derived our share of advantage. It must not be forgotten that it was on the plains of Spain that our gallant Army was formed, and was so often led to victory by the illustrious Officer at the head of it. He could not help feeling that the two countries had derived mutual advantages from the part we then took in that war; and he believed that Spain could never forget what had then taken place if she had not been tauntingly reminded of them, when, under such circumstances, feelings of gratitude were so apt to give way to those of another character. It was notorious in private life, when a man was constantly reminded of a debt of gratitude, that such a proceeding was not apt to excite feelings of a kindly nature. He therefore must deeply regret the unhappy interference on the part of the noble Lord. He had assumed that these instructions were the sole and ultimate cause of the expulsion of our Ambassador from Madrid. He said so, because he was in possession of no information which would justify him in coming to any other conclusion. He had alluded to the papers laid on the table prior to the expulsion of our Ambassador; they appeared to him, as well as to other Members of that House, to call for discussion, and for some expressions of opinion with regard to this subject; for they must recollect that there were circumstances connected with the matter which they could not get rid of, for the documents stood on the records of that House. Let them also recollect how these papers had been laid before the House. It was not in consequence of any Motion brought forward by a Member who wished to embarrass the Government, but in consequence of the publication in certain foreign newspapers of a portion of these documents, a Member of that House was induced to ask whether it was possible that such circumstances as had been described could be true? When this appeared to be the case, it became necessary that the papers should be laid on the table. It might, perhaps, have been better that these transactions had continued diplomatic secrets between England and Spain; but as the papers were there, and on the records of the House, it was to be considered whether they should be allowed to remain unaccompanied with observations, so that they hereafter might be allowed to refer to those proceedings as precedents to justify similar acts. If such were the case, it would be only necessary for a Foreign Minister interfering with the internal affairs of a foreign Government, to say, "Look at the case of Spain, in 1848, when interference took place without any notice:" it therefore was inexpedient that it should be recorded in history that these papers were laid before Parliament unaccompanied by observations in explanation. They had been told by the noble Lord that further communications were still going on, and perhaps he might lay them on the table; but they had no reason to know whether he would or would not do so. If they might judge of the importance of such further papers by those recently laid before Parliament, it might reasonably be assumed that they were of no great consequence. If they looked at the papers produced, it would appear that they were mere extracts, and the communications were not from a foreign Government, but were letters from our own Ambassador—or rather extracts, and apparently very partial extracts. These all referred to the proceedings connected with the instructions of the 16th of March. He would refer to one of them as a specimen of the whole. It was dated Madrid, March 4th, 1848, and was from Mr. Bulwer to Viscount Palmerston. It commenced—"I have just had an interview with the Duke of Sotomayor, who had requested to see me, when, he stated—" Here was a blank, and this was all that was given. The Duke then spoke. Yes, "the Duke stated;" but what he stated they were left in the dark about. But after telling them that "the Duke stated," the document proceeded:—"The Duke then spoke." So that after he had stated, it appeared he spoke. What he spoke was quite different from the statement.

> "The Duke then spoke of the interior policy of the Spanish Administration, saying, that though it had demanded the new law, which might be considered one *ad terrorem*, it had no intention to use this law, unless under very critical circumstances; and that whilst it should resist any insurrection that broke out, with all the force in its power, it would do all it could to avoid provoking insurrection."

Now in the paper numbered five, the only important fact he could find was that this decree of the Cortes, which, so far as he (Mr. Bankes) could understand, seemed to have given great offence to the noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who, in the great vigilance which he thought fit to exercise over the affairs of Spain, was highly displeased that the Government should obtain a power to resist insurrection which was not to be used unless critical circumstances should arise. This decree was passed, and he really could not understand why the noble Lord should have felt displeased at the Government obtaining powers which were given to them by a majority of the Cortes of 148 votes to 45. It seemed to be a tolerably popular manifestation of the wishes and determination of the Legislature. And the Bill passed the other House by a majority of 83 votes to 13. Yet the noble Lord was displeased with the Cortes for having passed a law of this description. Now these were all the preliminary points which were given to the House upon which to form a judgment. He found nothing in them which would give rise to the opinion that they explained the entire circumstances of the transaction. And he believed he should find as he went through the remainder of the papers, that there was no other very valuable addition, except one. And here he would beg leave to call the attention of the noble Lord to the fact that he could not have read those letters immediately on their coming over. Because, when the first papers were presented to the House, he (Mr. Bankes) asked the noble Lord whether there were any other papers which would throw light upon the subject; and the noble Lord replied that there were none further, except one or two, which were considered in the nature of private and confidential communications, and referring solely to the observations which appeared in reference to the articles in the *Clamor Publico*, and to the accusation brought against Mr. Bulwer, on account of the appearance of those articles. But it now appeared that there were other observations in these letters, which, so far from referring merely to those accusations, were, after one or two preliminary paragraphs in allusion to them, a complete explanation of the views of the Spanish Minister with regard to the whole of the transaction. And he should say that the paper to which he was alluding was one undoubtedly drawn up with very great spirit, and, he should add, with very great ability. It was one in which the Spanish Minister stated, with the feelings of a statesman and a gentleman, how much wounded he had been by the tone adopted towards himself and his Court. He (Mr. Bankes) should take occasion by and by to refer more particularly to that portion of it. The letter to which he was alluding was the one dated the 15th of April. And certainly if the noble Lord had it in his possession when the papers were first called for and given to the House, it was a singular omission on his part to have left it out of the selection. He assumed that the noble Lord had it not in his possession at the time. But from the date it was evident he must have received it shortly afterwards, as he certainly could not have described it as merely referring to the articles in the newspapers. [Viscount PALMERSTON: I did not say so.] He understood the noble Lord to have said that the letters he had not presented referred only to the accusations against Mr. Bulwer, having reference to a publication in the *Clamor Publico*. However, with regard to the remainder of the public papers, the greater portion was made up of extracts from newspapers. He (Mr. Bankes) did not mean to undervalue the authority of newspapers. He had no doubt that in Spain as well as in England the newspapers were conducted by persons of the highest talents and character, and by persons to whose opinion considerable weight might be attached; but then in Spain as well as in England they were conducted by persons who wrote in them anonymously on questions of state and policy. And here he begged to be allowed to direct the attention of the House to a passage which had been only put into the hands of Members two hours before. They had only received it when they came into the House. And in that, the last publication, there was one of those extracts from newspapers, in regard to which he could not but tell Her Majesty's Government they had exhibited a very singular degree of want of discretion in putting it into the hands of Members. They were stamping with a certain degree of authenticity those extracts, by giving them in the form of papers printed under the authority of that House. This last paper referred to the fears which were entertained by some Spaniards as to the anger which might be excited in Great Britain, in consequence of the expulsion of the British Minister from Madrid; and, in order to allay those fears, the editor of the *Heraldo* proceeded to quiet the minds of his fellow-countrymen thus:—

> "A single reflection suffices to dissipate those disquietudes, viz., the impossibility in which the English Cabinet is at this time to place itself in a hostile attitude with respect to the Continent; sapped by the Irish insurrection, which exhausts its resources, and requires the presence of a considerable part of its army; by the increasing deficit of its treasury; by the general discredit brought upon its policy by the manœuvres made use of in the affairs of Italy; by the suspicions which its friendly relations with the Court of Vienna infuse into all Europe; and, finally, by the Chartist party, which, although frustrated in its efforts up to this time, counts upon the indirect co-operation of the new Parliamentary faction led by Hume and Cobden, and which, without the least doubt, would avail itself of the difficulties which a foreign war would bring upon the Cabinet, to light up the flames of civil war in all parts of the United Kingdom."

He would now beg the attention of the House to that letter of the noble Lord which stood first upon the list, at least which originally stood first upon the list, and which he considered as first, certainly, in importance:—

> "Foreign Office, March 16, 1848.
>
> "Sir—I have to instruct you to recommend earnestly to the Sanish Government and to the Queen Mother, if you have an opportunity of doing so, the adoption of a legal and constitutional course of government in Spain."

It should be observed that the Cortes were then sitting, carrying those measures by those large majorities that were about three to one in one Chamber of their Legislature, and four to one in the other. That was the time at which the British Minister recommended the adoption of a constitutional course of government in Spain. The letter went on:—

> "The recent fall of the King of the French and of his whole family, and the expulsion of his Ministers, ought to teach the Spanish Court and Government how great is the danger of an attempt to govern a country in a manner at variance with the feelings and opinions of the nation; and the catastrophe which has happened in France must serve to show that even a large and well-disciplined army becomes an ineffectual defence for the Crown when the course pursued by the Crown is at variance with the general sentiments of the country. It would then be wise for the Queen of Spain, in the present critical state of affairs, to strengthen the Executive Government by enlarging the basis upon which the administration is founded, and by calling to her councils some of those men who possess the confidence of the Liberal party.—I am, &c.
>
> (Signed) "PALMERSTON."

Now, it might have been very well for the noble Lord to wish that there might have been a good Government, both for Spain and for the interests of this country; and it might have been well that such a course as he counselled should have been pursued. But if the noble Lord had wished to defeat any such measure, he surely could not have adopted a better course for such a purpose than to have made such an insulting proposition. For how did the Duke de Sotomayor know but that the noble Lord the Foreign Secretary for England might have had some communication with these liberal persons whom he wished so strongly to thrust upon Spain? How could he endure that his Ministry should be forced out by the interference of a foreign Power? And, so far as could be judged from some of the letters, it became impossible to avoid the inference that such a result was what was desired. He might agree with the noble Lord, that a better Government for Spain might be formed. He might agree with him that a Ministry more favourable to the interests of this country, and to the promotion of commercial relations between this country and Spain, might be found and formed than that which now existed in Spain. But in order to compass such a desirable end, a very different course should have been pursued, and a surer mode of producing a contrary result could not have been taken than the course which the noble Lord had adopted. He admitted that the present Government in Spain was not one very favourably disposed to forward the commercial relations with England. He admitted that with regard to those free-trade speculations which we were led to adopt, there had been in Spain no corresponding disposition manifested. Considerable disappointment had been excited by the manner in which Spain had acted; for whilst England was removing those restrictions and making those concessions, she had been met in Spain with fresh restrictions. He found, by papers that were presented to the House in November last, that decrees had been passed by which additional duties had been imposed upon woollen goods the produce of this country. He found that similar decrees had been passed in regard to cotton goods, and to goods that were mixtures of wool and cotton; and Mr. Bulwer, he should do him the justice to say, seemed to have interfered and acted most promptly in order to obtain, if possible, the removal of such restrictions. On the 23rd of November he wrote from Madrid expostulating upon the subject. On the 24th of December Mr. Bulwer again wrote, requesting a reconsideration of the tariff, and that at least the time of thirty days, which was given as the limit, should be lengthened. To these communications the Duke of Sotomayor gave no answer until after a considerable lapse of time. On the 28th December he wrote to Mr. Bulwer, defending the Spanish tariff on the ground that the decrees were not directed particularly against British manufactured goods, but were equally adverse to French and others, and that England had, therefore, no right to complain, she being placed on a complete equality with other nations. The pith of that letter was, that the ordonnances did not apply more to Great Britain than to France or other countries, because the English were put in no worse condition than the French. But if ever there was an occasion upon which it might have been fair to remind Spain of the debt of gratitude she owed to England, it was such as then presented itself. If ever it might have been well to remind Spain of the blood we had shed, and of the treasure we had expended in her cause, it was then. Not that she should have been reminded of those facts in an offensive tone, but there might have been a reference gently and inoffensively made to the contrast which existed between England and France in that respect. It might have been suggested that France too had indeed spent a great deal of her blood and of her treasure in Spain, but it was in invading and subjugating her, and that putting us on the same footing with France was not a fair or just return; but still, no more than a friendly remonstrance on the subject of a friendly commercial relation should have been urged. He could conceive no better way in which our diplomatists, our foreign Ministers, and our ambassadors, could be employed than in watching over the commercial relations of the country. But he denied the expediency of any interference with the domestic affairs of other countries, and, most of all, any interference with the suggestion of who should be the Ministers of those countries—who were to be the rulers in them. Let them see how the affair would touch themselves. Let them consider what they would say if a Minister of Spain should dare to direct the Spanish Ambassador to place in the hands of the noble Lord the Chief Minister a communication of the nature which the Foreign Secretary of this country addressed to the First Minister of Spain. What would they think if the Spanish Minister, directing the noble Lord's attention to the clubs, to the Chartists, and the other matters alluded to as difficulties of this country, should recommend him to widen the basis of his Government, and ask him — had he not better at once take into his councils those Gentlemen to whom allusion had been already made as forming the new party? adding, that if he did not agree to do these things, they (the Spanish Government) would at least have the satisfaction of having warned them of the likely consequence. The noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs might possibly say that this interference was one which, in all circumstances, ought not to be resorted to; but then Spain was in a peculiar situation. The noble Lord, indeed, both by himself and the Ambassador, insisted upon the peculiar link which existed between the countries, because of the benefits received by Spain; and that was one of the matters which had mainly tended to produce the unhappy result. But the noble Lord should have remembered that we were dealing with a friendly Government, which was under great obligations to us, both for blood and money expended in their cause, and which was now agitated by contending parties, of which we were unable to see who would ultimately be likely to rise to the head of affairs. The noble Lord might tell him, perhaps, that he considered it an excepted case, and that he had, therefore, thrust upon Spain an interference which he would not have thought justified in regard to any other nation. But had there been similar cases where remonstrance had been urged by our diplomatists in earlier times—by diplomatists as experienced and as able as the noble Lord (Lord Palmerston), and with whom the noble Lord need feel no shame at being compared? He was sure the noble Lord would not feel offended with any of the comparisons he (Mr. Bankes) was about to institute. He was about to refer to former occurrences in Holland and in Spain; and, firstly, to a period not the most flourishing in the history of Holland—a period when she was distracted by factions which caused the greatest uncertainty and danger to the State, and when she was under obligations to England for her liberty, and for the means of carrying on that commerce which led to her greatness. Writing to Lord Arlington, Sir William Temple thus expressed himself:—

"TO MY LORD ARLINGTON.

"The Hague, June 17, 1670.

"Monsieur de Witt returned yesterday. There is a violent humour run against him. But I suppose the bottom of this is the same with all popular humours, that is, a design in the leaders to change the scene, that so those who have been long employed may make room for those who have been long out. I am not of opinion they will succeed to prejudice him suddenly, both because his chief enemies acknowledge his great abilities and usefulness to the State, and because he will always have it in his power to fall in very considerably with the Prince's interest, which the other party pretends to promote. I thought fit to say thus much at once to your Lordship, that so you may the better know what to make of twenty reports that may arrive upon this occasion; though it will, I think, after all, be our parts, both in England and here, to seem the least we can concerned in them, further than our wishes to the perfect union of a State we are so nearly allied to."

He (Mr. Bankes) wished the noble Lord had followed the example set him by Sir William Temple. In 1678, we had an Ambassador at Madrid, Sir William Godolphin. That gentleman had to present a remonstrance of a very serious nature to the Minister, and he addressed the following letter to Don John of Austria:—

"TO DON JOHN OF AUSTRIA.

"Feb. 12-22, 1677-8.

"The King my master hath often commanded me to complaine of the ill conduct of the Spanish Ministers in England (particularly of Salinas and Fonseca), which I am sorry to say hath not been amended by the Marquess of Bourgomaine. It is manifest that the interests of Spain in England have been very much prejudiced and retarded by their actions, and will be more so if there be not a speedy remedy. Above all, it will be requisite to avoid a course too often practised by them, namely, to discourse and reveal their private conferences had with the King and his Ministers to others who are not of his council, His Majesty having resolved never to treat or confer with any Minister of what Prince soever that shall be detected in so doing; how much less will he suffer any to abide in his Court who shall so far presume to violate the laws of hospitality as to mislead and stir up the minds of people inexpert in public affairs, not only by revealing to them under false colours what sometimes passeth, but by reporting for truth his own fictions and the pure inventions of malice, under the specious name of negotiation and discourses with the King and his Ministers—a seditious practice, which the impunity of some hath made an evil example, but will always prove destructive to the negotiations of such who use the same."

In this case, Sir W. Godolphin received a reply on the 22nd March; and by date March 12-22, 1677-8, Sir William writes to Mr. Secretary Coventry:—

"Order will go by this post to the Count of Egmont for his immediate passage into England in quality of Embassadour Extraordinary, without waiting for equipage which should follow him; Don John telling me that this expedient had been taken in complaisance to the King my master on the representation I had made against Bourgomaine. (Signed) "WM. GODOLPHIN."

And thus it would be seen that such of our Ambassadors as made these remonstrances met with the most immediate attention. And although Spain at the present moment might not be in the state of palmy greatness which once belonged to her, England had no reason to think that her spirit was abashed, that her pride was lowered, or that her heart was broken. The last thing she would lose would be the sense of respect which belonged to her, and she would rise as one man to resent any indignity that should be offered to her. He had given the House an instance of the readiness with which she had attended to the complaints which had been formerly made to her upon the subject of diplomatic secrets being made public, and the private conversation of Ministers repeated. Surely she had a right to expect the same courtesy when remonstrances were made upon the subject of her mode of government, and affecting her dignity. But if the letter of the 16th March had stood alone, and if that letter had remained alone, it would have been strong enough as a ground of complaint—it would indeed have been a subject for regret; but it might have been explained. But when it was followed up by the letter of the noble Lord, dated 20th April, it showed the spirit in which the remonstrance had been made. The noble Lord wrote—

> "Sir—I have received your despatch of the 11th instant with its inclosures, and I have to instruct you to state to the Duke of Sotomayor, that Her Majesty's Government entirely approve the step which you took in making your communication of the 7th instant, and likewise of your note of the 12th. That Her Majesty's Government, however, are not at all offended, either by the sending back of your communication of the 7th of April, or by the angry tone and language of the Duke of Sotomayor's note of the 10th, however they may regret the existence of those feelings in the minds of the Spanish Government, of which the language of his Excellency's note and the return of yours were proofs. Her Majesty's Government, in making to the Government of Spain the representations, and in giving the advice, which your communication conveyed, were inspired by no sentiment but that of sincere friendship for Spain, and of deep interest in the welfare of Queen Isabella. They felt that in making that communication, they were performing a duty, and not taking any undue liberty; and therefore, at all events, it is a satisfaction to Her Majesty's Government to reflect, that although their counsel has been rejected, and their communication has been returned, the note has nevertheless been read, and the counsel has been tendered; and that whatever calamity may happen in Spain, Her Majesty's Government stand acquitted of not having done what they could to prevent it."

Now, there was something very strange in the expression, to say that that note had not offended, which contained angry language and was written in an angry tone, and which accompanied a returned communication. It was a satisfaction to the writer of the angry note at all events to know that it had been read; that the person whom it was intended for had been obliged to read it; and a note too that was very little short of an insult. In private life, indeed, it would be nothing short of it. The despatch went on:—

> "With regard to the contents of the Duke of Sotomayor's note, Her Majesty's Government have only to observe, that if the right of Her Britannic Majesty to the Throne of the United Kingdom had been disputed by a pretending rival; if civil war had arisen out of such a conflict of claims; if the British Government had only a few years ago sent a special envoy to Madrid to solicit the assistance of Spain in order to place Her Majesty on Her Throne; if that assistance had been given, both morally by treaty engagements, and physically by military and naval forces; if the aid thus afforded by Spain had contributed in so essential a degree to secure the Crown to Her Majesty that it might with truth be said that, without such aid, Her Majesty would not now have been Queen of England—"

Was it not very strange to tell the Minister of the Crown of Spain that this country had been the means of placing the Crown on the head of the Queen of Spain? This had not been hitherto the opinion of the people of England. They had not considered that they were embarking in the doubtful chances of a civil war, but that they were asked merely to strengthen the Throne of the legitimate Sovereign. They believed that the Sovereign whom they had so assisted had a right to the Throne; but never until now had he heard that they had the arrogance to assert that it was they who had placed the Crown upon that Sovereign's head; and yet the despatch went the length of saying so. It then continued—

> "If, moreover, there still remained a pretender who asserted his right, and whose pretensions were backed by a large party in the United Kingdom; and if upon every symptom of danger from that pretender, and that party, the British Government was in the habit of reminding Spain of the treaty of engagements which she had entered into; was also in the habit of asserting that those engagements were still in force, and was continually claiming the benefit of the alleged existence of those arrangements; if all those things existed, and if the Government of Spain had, in a moment of general disturbance in Europe, warned the British Government of dangers by which, in their opinion, the security of Her Majesty's Throne was menaced—I think I may confidently affirm that under such circumstances any statesmen who might be Ministers of the British Crown, instead of sending back the note in which such represen-

> tations were conveyed, and instead of replying to it in discourteous terms, would have accepted the communication in the same spirit of friendship in which it was made; and whether they adopted or not the advice which it contained, would at least have considered it as a proof of the continued existence of that friendship on the part of Spain to which, in such case, would have been owing the circumstance that those British Ministers had the honour of being advisers of the Crown, instead of being proscribed exiles in a foreign land."

That was a strong passage, no doubt, to address to a foreign Minister. To a proud man, whether he were Minister or no, it was strong language to make use of; but to a man holding the position of first Minister of a proud empire, it was indeed strong. Lest, however, there should be any doubt as to the intention of using this language to the Spanish Minister, the despatch concludes with the words, "You will transmit to the Duke of Sotomayor a copy of this despatch." There was a positive order to send the despatch to the very man who was told that it was to the British Government he owed the fortune of not being an exile at this moment in a foreign land. When he coupled that letter with the letter of the 16th April, he could not help repeating what he had already said, that while he was ready to vindicate the honour of this country, still he could not adopt that course without admitting that the noble Lord had placed them originally in the wrong. And he did not think that it would be an honest course for this country to pursue if they were now to rise up with vehement denunciations against the Court of Spain, in accordance with what was no doubt the general feeling of this country, namely, the determination to vindicate its honour, unless they at the same time declared that, so far as they had been in error, they were ready to offer amends. If he understood the feelings of the English people—which he believed did not greatly differ from those to which he now gave expression—they went to the extent of entertaining regret that England should have wounded the honest and honourable pride of a great nation in the vain attempt to accomplish an injudicious, ill-timed, and unnecessary interference. He could not help at this moment recollecting that the noble Lord at the head of Foreign Affairs, as well as the noble Lord at the head of Her Majesty's Government, had belonged to the Government of the late Lord Grey, who came into power under the triple declaration as to the course which he would pursue in the Government of the country, these professions being economy, reform, and non-interference with foreign States. ["No! Economy, reform, and peace."] He had thought that non-intervention was the term that had been made use of; but both had the same signification. Peace was non-intervention, and non-intervention was peace. If they went on in this way, meddling with the affairs of other countries, they never could have peace. He cared little, therefore, about the variation of the phrase, for he thought that the sentiment was the same. But he was very much mistaken if, when Lord Grey made that declaration, he had not done so from the recollection of interference in the affairs of foreign nations at other periods, and those, too, periods when the noble Lord opposite formed a portion of another Ministry, and which Lord Grey thought had carried the spirit of intervention to an unwise extent. Among the papers that had been delivered to Members that day, was a letter from Sir H. Bulwer himself. Now, for his part, it had always appeared to him that Sir H. Bulwer required no vindication at all. He could not find that at any period Sir H. Bulwer had exceeded, or had departed from, his instructions. He had acted strictly up to them, and receiving as he did that second indication of approval from the noble Lord, in his letter of the 20th of April, he must have remained perfectly satisfied in his own mind that he had not in any way exceeded the instructions or views of the noble Lord. He had already briefly referred to the allegation that had been made, that the Minister of Spain entertained the impression (derived, it would seem, from the report of the debates in the other House of Parliament that had appeared in foreign journals), that the noble Lord had been mistaken, when he said, in his letter of the 20th of April, that the British Ambassador at Madrid had the full approbation of all the Members of Her Majesty's Cabinet in what he had done. In the letter of Sir H. Bulwer, given into the hands of Members that day, the words of the Duke of Sotomayor on this subject were quoted; and he believed that the noble Lord would not regret the opportunity which was now afforded to him of stating publicly, in the presence of the First Minister of the Crown, and in a manner which—as they had reason to suppose the Spanish Minister vigilantly regarded their proceedings in that House—would produce the desired effect in the minds of the Spanish Government, whether it was, or was not, the fact, that the whole conduct of the British Minister at Madrid had received the full and entire sanction of the whole of Her Majesty's Cabinet. One good result would thus follow from this discussion, that if this were an erroneous impression on the mind of the Duke of Sotomayor, it would be cleared up by the statement which would be made by the noble Lord that night. There were one or two other points, also, with regard to parts of this transaction, on which it would be desirable if the noble Lord would favour the House with some distinct information. He wished to know, firstly, whether any other cause or causes had been assigned by the Government of Spain for the dismissal of Sir Henry Bulwer, beyond those which were contained in the papers now before the House; secondly, as he had already intimated, he thought the noble Lord would be happy to have the opportunity of explaining whether Sir Henry Bulwer's conduct had met with the complete approbation of the whole of the British Cabinet. He should be also happy if the noble Lord would take that opportunity of explaining what was the extent of interference which he claimed over the Spanish Government, referred to as it was again and again in the course of these papers, and which his Ambassador, acting under his instructions, had also been disposed to claim as binding Spain in a state of subjection to this country in return for benefits which she had received. Also, whether it was the real assumption of the noble Lord that England had placed the Queen of Spain on the throne, not from any claim of right on her part, or not mainly from that claim, but because of peculiar principles which she and those who adhered to her professed, and on account of which England selected her in preference to the other pretender to the Spanish throne. There was one other question which he wished to ask the noble Lord. It appeared singular that in these papers there were no instructions to be found from the noble Lord of any date subsequent to the 20th of April, with the exception of a short immaterial paragraph. He was aware that he was not entitled to call for any instructions that the noble Lord might have given; but he thought it was not irrelevant to ask whether or not any such instructions, in point of fact, had been given. It would happen, probably, and it might be at no distant period, though no one could tell how long, that when this matter had been concluded, he hoped amicably, between the two countries, the noble Lord might make a statement to the House upon it, and might think it necessary to call upon the House for an opinion in favour of his policy. He had no desire to prevent such a course from being taken. He had not brought forward this discussion without knowing from the noble Lord that it would not have any injurious tendency, because the noble Lord had stated, in answer to an hon. Member of his own party, that the provoking of this discussion would in no degree embarrass the settlement of the dispute. The noble Lord had so expressed himself, as he (Mr. Bankes) understood, in answer to a question from the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster. If the noble Lord's answer on that occasion had been different, he (Mr. Bankes) would not have brought forward this discussion; but when he heard that the debate would occasion no embarrassment between the two Governments—when he had heard from the noble Lord the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and the noble Lord at the head of Her Majesty's Government, that they had no wish to avoid the discussion, he thought it better to follow the inclination of his own mind in expressing his deep regret at the wounds that had been given to the feelings of a sensitive nation. He had offered to put his Motion in another shape; but when he found the noble Lord would not accede to the proposition of allowing him a day for bringing forward a distinct Motion on the subject, he felt obliged to bring the question before the House as an Amendment on a vote on the Order of the Day. He felt that in adopting this course he was placed under a disadvantage; but still, when he considered that he was affording the noble Lord an opportunity of clearing up the history of this transaction, he thought that some advantage must be derived from the discussion. He was also encouraged to take the course he had pursued from knowing that he would not embarrass in any way the affairs of the country. He had no object in view, except, as far as his humble powers would allow, to aid in removing, certainly not in aggravating, any unpleasant feelings that might have arisen between the two countries. With these views, and seeing that the Government, though they had the opportunity, had no intention whatever of giving any information to the

House as to the position in which they were placed by this singular transaction, he thought it right to bring it under the notice of the House; and in doing so he was certainly influenced by no undue spirit of opposition to Her Majesty's Ministers. His wish was, that the two countries might soon return to those friendly relations that had so long existed, and that had been so honourable both to that country and to this, and that he hoped would long continue to prevail with honour to both nations; and he believed that it was in the power of the noble Lord, by the declaration which he might make on this question, to soothe the wounded feelings of Spain, and to promote that adjustment of the dispute which they all so much desired.

MR. SHEIL: In the first notice which was given by the hon. and learned Member for Dorsetshire, he made a sentence in one of the letters of Sir H. Bulwer, the subject of inculpation. He has since changed his ground, and directed against the noble Lord his exclusive censure. In doing so, he has, I think, taken a just and creditable course, because my noble Friend does not shrink from responsibility; and for having introduced this subject into discussion, the noble Lord feels, I am convinced, thankful to the hon. and learned Member. The question—you perceive, Sir, that I am avoiding all prefatory prolixity—the true question is, whether Lord Palmerston was justified in interfering in the internal concerns of Spain, by the peculiar relation in which he stood towards that country. In order to appreciate it, a retrospect—and it shall be rapid—will be required. In the year 1834, the Spanish Government solicited the assistance of this country. The Marquess of Miraflores was sent as a special envoy here. That nobleman has written an account of his mission. He says, that Lord Palmerston had great difficulties to contend with: his earnestness in the cause of Spain, overcome them all. The preliminary articles in the Treaty of Quadruple Alliance were signed in the month of April, 1834, when Lord Stanley was in the Cabinet. The Marquess of Miraflores states, that their effect was signal and immediate. Don Carlos fled from Portugal. Lord Palmerston was not slow in availing himself of the right of interference given him by the treaty to obtain a mitigation of the horrors of civil war. It was hoped that the pacification of Spain had been accomplished: that hope was a delusive one. Don Carlos landed in Biscay, where he was joined by almost the entire of the population; the Spanish Government was filled with dismay. The Marquess of Miraflores renewed his supplications to Lord Palmerston, and, to use his own phrase, addressed to him the most ardent unremitting entreaties. Lord Palmerston and the Cabinet yielded to these adjurations. England gave naval, military, and moral help, for which gratitude was expressed in the noblest phrases which the most sonorous Castilian could supply. There can be no doubt that, but for the interposition of this country, I may add, but for Lord Palmerston, Don Carlos would have been King of Spain. The Basque, the Church, the Monastic Orders, almost all the aristocracy, and the still nobler peasantry of Spain, were on his side. The Duke de Sotomayor is, indeed, pleased to say, that England interfered from selfish motives. By what selfish motives England could be influenced, I am at a loss to conjecture. The people of this country have, indeed, always been, and will always continue to be, in sympathy with men struggling for liberty; but, as Sir H. Bulwer justly observes, the people and Government of England had nothing to gain, beyond the lofty consciousness of assisting a righteous cause, and contributing to the establishment of constitutional institutions. Those institutions were established, and fell with Espartero. The late Prime Minister, I remember, expressed his sorrow for Espartero's fall. Nothing can be further from my intention than to express any censure upon the policy pursued by the late Government and Lord Aberdeen in reference to Spain. It was that noble Lord, by whom Sir H. Bulwer was appointed, not because he was bound to his Government by any ligature of party, but because he had the highest opinion of his talents. Sir H. Bulwer had distinguished himself at Constantinople, where the Commercial Treaty with Turkey had been negotiated through his means: he had displayed great abilities when connected with our embassy in Paris; and Lord Aberdeen, confiding in his discretion and in his talents, selected him in preference to his own more immediate friends, for the important, the delicate, and difficult office of Minister at Madrid. It would be a great mistake to imagine that Lord Aberdeen did not interfere in the internal concerns of Spain. He stated, indeed, that the marriage of the Queen of Spain was matter for exclusively Spanish determination; but Sir H. Bulwer having written to him, that he had heard from good authority that there existed an intention to plight the Queen of Spain in private, and to announce the fact to the Cortes, when it was beyond their power of revocation—this was obviously a strictly Spanish question, yet—what did Lord Aberdeen do? He directed Sir H. Bulwer to go to General Narvaez, and to tell him that he was instructed to state, that Lord Aberdeen did not credit the report; but that if any such purpose was entertained and should be carried into execution, the British Government would protest against it, as an infringement of the constitution, and as calculated to expose the Queen to danger, and to create confusion in the country. Might not General Narvaez have informed him that the Spanish law was no concern of his? If Lord Aberdeen was entitled to interfere in order to prevent a trick upon the Cortes, was not Lord Palmerston at least as well entitled to interfere, in order to prevent the total abolition of the Cortes, and to remonstrate against a policy by which every vestige of the constitution should be swept away? Lord Palmerston returned to office in 1846, and wrote a despatch in July in that year, which has been employed against Lord Palmerston, but which appears to me to constitute a complete case in his favour. Lord Palmerston depicts a vivid picture of the spectacle which Spain presented to him. The constitution existed but in name—the Cortes were a passive instrument in the hands of the Executive—the press, excepting for the purposes of adulation, was struck dumb; men had been exiled, incarcerated, or put to death without trial. The forms of liberty were increased, as a veil with which the stern features of despotism were imperfectly disguised. Lord Palmerston, after describing the state of Spain, observes that it was not to establish a grinding tyranny that England lent her aid in the agony of Spain. You will suppose that Lord Palmerston directed Sir Henry Bulwer to interfere and remonstrate against the misdeeds of the Moderado Administration. Quite the reverse: hear it, you who think that Lord Palmerston labours under some distempered addiction to intermeddle, which it is not his power to restrain. He says—

> "Her Majesty's Government are so sensible of the evil of interfering, even by friendly advice, in the internal affairs of independent States, that I have to abstain from giving you instructions to make any representations whatever to the Spanish Ministers, on these matters."

But wherefore was it that Lord Palmerston gave Sir H. Bulwer the most positive instructions not to interfere, in 1846, and directed him to interpose with his advice in 1848? For a very obvious reason. In 1846, the Throne of Louis Philippe was ostensibly stable. The Orleans dynasty and all the institutions of France had not been engulphed amidst that terrible concussion, whose shock was felt beyond the Pyrenees. But in 1848, that great event befel, at which we stand appalled, and to which history will look back with amazement. When Lord Palmerston behold every Throne in Europe rocking to its foundations, he turned his eyes towards Spain. Warned by Sir H. Bulwer, and perceiving a Carlist insurrection to be followed in all probability by a democracy, allied in stern sisterhood with France, the noble Lord, the author of the Quadruple Alliance, and of the treaty on whose subsistence Spain still insists, addressed a despatch to Sir H. Bulwer, in which not a single dictatorial phrase, not a single authoritative intimation, is to be found. That despatch reached Sir H. Bulwer on the 21st of March, but for twenty days after was not transmitted to the Spanish Government. Sir H. Bulwer reserved it as his last expedient. On the 23rd, the Cortes were virtually suppressed. On the 26th of March, an insurrection took place, and on the 28th of March, Sir H. Bulwer, trembling with apprehension for the fate of the Queen, made a verbal communication of the instructions which he had received. He afterwards saw the Queen Mother. His expostulations with that Princess were of no avail; at last, on the 9th of April, seeing that new perils were gathering round the Queen of Spain, Sir H. Bulwer determined to give to his admonition all the weight which he could impart to it, and gives the following statement of the course which he adopted:—

> "In this state of circumstances I consulted my instructions; I had already acted upon them by giving friendly and intimate advice without any effect being produced. It began to be very probable that Count Montemolin might show himself, supported by the Liberal party, and with the cry of the Constitution of 1812; this was here canvassed on one side, a republic on the other. Now, if the Pretender raised his banner, proclaiming constitutional principles, and we were called upon to support Queen Isabella, Her Catholic Majesty upholding military government, it would be difficult for us to support the military govern-

ment against the constitutional one, or to desert Queen Isabella suddenly, on the ground that we disapproved of the course she had pursued, unless there was some proof that we had so disapproved. My unofficial conversations had no authority. Even if Her Catholic Majesty fell without exposing us to this difficult and particular question, it might be said, 'Why did not Mr. Bulwer warn the Spanish Government of the dangerous course they were pursuing? Why did he not do so with all the weight that a formal communication of the views of Great Britain would have afforded?'

"It was, my Lord, in view of all these various probabilities that I gave the sanction of your Lordship's name and of my own opinion to the advice I presumed to offer. It was not, that I am aware of, couched in improper terms; I did not, therefore, expect a violently hostile reply, or that the present Government of Spain would involve amongst Queen Isabella's enemies Her Majesty's Government, with more than the precipitancy with which it had included in this category distinguished and loyal Spaniards. The result shows I was mistaken."

Why was he mistaken? The Spanish Government believed that England was on the brink of a revolution. Their anticipations were akin to their desires; they imagined that the institutions of England, whose deep foundations they do not know, nor the indissoluble cement with which they are constructed, would be as readily overthrown as those frail edifices which their Continental architects call "a constitution." They omitted to reflect that, in this country, liberty and order have given each other reciprocal guarantees, and mistook a Chartist procession for a nation's march. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Dorsetshire has adverted to an article in the *Heraldo* newspaper, which is under the immediate influence or inspiration of Sartorius, a Cabinet Minister. It is the organ of the Spanish Government. The editor of that journal distinctly states that England is exposed to the greatest perils, and is unable to resent any affront which might be offered her. It was under the impressions of which this paragraph is the exponent, that the Spanish Minister, forgetting all the service which had been conferred upon his country, or rather resenting them—forgetting that even recently Spain had appealed to the Quadruple Alliance—availed themselves of the occasion which they thought had presented itself of offering with impunity a gross insult to the benefactor of their Sovereign. We are told that the English Minister is humiliated. It would be strange indeed if the Minister of the greatest empire in the world—if the Minister of England, that can inflict a terrible vengeance for an affront, but can also afford to despise it—it would be strange, I say, if the Minister of England were humiliated by the Minister of a Government that not many years ago fell down upon its knees before him. But instead of insisting on that incalculable disparity, I think it better to say, that with right, with truth, with justice, and with honour, humiliation cannot be allied. It is with nations as with men. I will put this case to the hon. and learned Gentleman, who justly said that it is with nations as with men. If a man, calling himself his friend, were in his direst need to fly to him for aid—if that aid were promptly, largely, and generously given—if, not contented with lifting him from the earth, and raising him to prosperity, the hon. and learned Gentleman were to become his surety, and contract for the fulfilment of his future engagements—and if after doing all this, or more than this, seeing that the man for whom he had done so much was rushing again to destruction, he were to interpose, and to exclaim, "For your own sake and for my sake, pause in your race to ruin"—and if instead of thanking him for the advice which he had every right to have given, the man whom he had saved were to turn contumeliously upon him, and strike him upon the cheek—does the hon. Gentleman think that he would be dishonoured? or does he not rather know, that the vile insult would recoil upon the heartless ingrate, who would pull down shame and humiliation upon himself? This observation applies to every incident in this series of transactions, which reflects so much real ignominy upon the thankless Ministers of Spain, from the first repudiation of Lord Palmerston's despatch, down to the dismissal of Sir H. Bulwer, upon grounds to which, in the annals of diplomatic affairs, no parallel can be discovered. Sir H. Bulwer is told by the men who seek to stab his character to the core, that they are afraid of his being assassinated at Madrid; and they tell him that he has been abandoned here. He has not been abandoned here. The noble Lord has not abandoned, and never will abandon him. "Never," said the Duke of Wellington, with the moral elevation that consistently belongs to him, "never give up the man who has done his best to do his duty." In the sentiment of the gallant soldier the generous civilian coincides. Lord Palmerston has approved and does approve of every thing that Sir H. Bulwer did or said; and I am persuaded that he would fling his office to the wind, rather than desert him. But there are other charges, it seems, against Sir H. Bulwer, none of which are distinctly stated, but are dispersed in whispers by the men who have laboured to undo him. If the Spanish Ministers have any accusation to press against the Minister of England, why was it not set forth in the letter with which his passport was transmitted; because Sir H. Bulwer would then have had the opportunity of refuting the libel and confounding the libeller. The inquisitorial process was not unnaturally thought the most convenient one. But if the Government of Spain have exhibited little knowledge of the political condition of the country, in stating that Messrs. Hume and Cobden would place themselves at the head of a revolutionary movement, they have manifested an ignorance still more gross, in imagining that the people of England would give to base calumnies any other heed than that of indignation and of disgust. The base tales which have been put into circulation do not deserve any specific confutation; but it would be wrong to withhold a specimen of the mode adopted to destroy the character of a gentleman whom they are devising pretences for having expelled. A pattern falsehood should be laid before the House. In one of the Government papers published in Madrid, Sir H. Bulwer was charged with having paid for the assassination of General Fulgosio. From this sample of atrocity the whole mass of infamous imputations may be judged. I do not think it necessary to enter into this case further than I have done. I have purposely abstained from minutely noticing the details of the correspondence laid on the table of the House. Much of it, however interesting, does not affect the real question on which you have to decide: whether Lord Palmerston was justified in his interference, when he conveyed his advice to the Spanish Government in the midst of circumstances of a nature so peculiar as those in which that Government is now placed. If Lord Palmerston interfered wantonly, officiously, and overweeningly, condemn him; but if he was influenced by a real unaffected solicitude for the good of the Spanish Queen and of the Spanish people—if he desired to avert from the illustrious Lady on whose head he had contributed to fasten the diadem of Spain, the danger that hung so darkly, and still hangs so imminently, upon her—then the controversy is at end, and the imputations which have been heaped so laboriously upon the noble Lord are at once disposed of. For weeks the noble Lord has been the theme of continued invective. But this is not the first time that Lord Palmerston has been assailed with fierce derision, and aspersed with virulent vituperation. I have, however, observed, that whenever the noble Lord has had the opportunity of defending himself, and has been heard in this great tribunal, where the Ministers of England are put before the Gentlemen of England upon their trial for their fame—whenever he has had the means of proving that he was swayed in all that he did by the love of England, and the passion for freedom, his vindication has been triumphantly victorious; and he has been hailed by the acclamations of the House of Commons, when he has ceased to speak. As it was, so it will again be. He will be sustained by the majority of this House, who cannot fail to feel that this is not a time for the indulgence of party—that in this crisis in the destinies of the empire, rash experiments are not to be made in any department of the State—that although the noble Lord may not be incapable of error, or may have been betrayed into mistakes, yet that, taking him for all in all, there is no man intellectually and morally better qualified to encounter great emergencies—that he is fit to cope with mighty hazards—and that England may be sure of him, whenever there shall be need of great talents and great sagacity, and when tranquil courage and indomitable determination shall be required.

Viscount MAHON said, that the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had concluded his speech by complaining of the violent personal attacks to which, as he thought, the noble Lord the Foreign Secretary had been latterly exposed. He (Viscount Mahon) should feel sincere regret if, in the observations which he was now about to offer to the House, a single word were to fall from him inconsistent with his respect for the noble Lord. He entertained that feeling of high respect for the noble Lord, on account of his eminent and undoubted ability, his long experience in public affairs, and the high post which he now for the third time filled. Neither was he insensible to the delicacy of the subject, and the apprehension of saying anything which might aggravate the difficulty of forming negotiations with a foreign and hitherto friendly Power. But the question having been brought before the House, he hoped he could, consistently with that feeling of personal respect, and also with due regard to those negotiations now in progress, venture to state to the House the opinions formed upon the present transactions. He entirely conceded to the right hon. Gentleman that the noble Lord had, under all the circumstances, a right to tender some advice to the Spanish Government. After the sacrifices made by us for that country—after the assistance we had given in the civil strife connected with Don Carlos, the money we had expended, and the stores we had supplied—he thought England had a right to offer advice in suitable terms to the Spanish Government. But the question then arose, in what terms and to what effect that advice ought to be given? When he looked at the despatch of the 16th of March, he must say that he could not concur either in the scope or in the terms of that advice. In that despatch not only is set forth the course of policy which was to be pursued, but a change of Administration was also recommended:—

> "The course pursued by the Crown is at variance with the general sentiments of the country. It would, then, be wise for the Queen of Spain, in the present critical state of affairs, to strengthen the Executive Government, by enlarging the basis upon which the Administration is founded, and by calling to her councils some of those men who possess the confidence of the Liberal party."

Now he could not but think that this was stepping beyond the proper and usual line of tendering good advice; not only pointing out the measures but almost the men to be employed. It was not unusual for men of weight and station in this country, from time to time, to go to the head of the Government and give him suggestions, and tell him their views as to the propriety or impropriety of the course of policy the Government was pursuing. These counsels were given in an amicable spirit, and were generally received in an amicable spirit. But he could not but think the case would be different if those persons were to say, "We advise a change of Administration. You are unfit for office. Tell the Queen to call other men to her councils." He could not but think that, if such language as that was used, the friendly spirit would have been quite laid aside. He regretted therefore to see that, in this case, the noble Lord had given advice, not merely as to the measures but as to the men to be employed; and when he looked at the terms of the despatch, he must again say that he found in them grounds for regret. Remembering the national jealousy of Spain of foreign interference, he thought the utmost care and circumspection ought to have been taken, lest a single word should fall which would wound the sensitive jealousy of the Spanish people. It was impossible to know anything of the Spanish people without being aware to what an extent they carried their jealousy of foreign interference. Indeed it was a distinguishing ingredient in their character. Could it be said that the noble Lord had consulted this jealousy of the Spanish Government—could it be said that in this despatch, unaccompanied as it was with terms of persuasion or argument, but authoritative and peremptory—he had paid any regard to this feeling of pride? He would read the commencement of that despatch:—

> "I have to instruct you to recommend earnestly to the Spanish Government and to the Queen Mother, if you have an opportunity of doing so, the adoption of a legal and constitutional course of government in Spain."

Now he thought the noble Lord, so far from assuming this brief and decisive tone, ought to have at least prefaced his views of the course of Spanish policy which he wished to see carried out, with stating, as he truly might, that he was impelled by none but friendly motives, and that the Government, in tendering this advice, was wholly uninfluenced by any selfish object. But then it might be said, this despatch was not intended for the Spanish Government. He now begged to ask the question, whether the despatch of the 16th of March, 1848, was intended merely for the private information of Sir H. Bulwer, or to be communicated to the Spanish Government? He would be glad to know which was the fact. If that despatch was intended merely for the instruction of Sir H. Bulwer, then the noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs might be excused. The noble Lord might say, "I wrote a letter to him as our diplomatic agent, and I was not bound to use very cautious terms. I was not bound to recapitulate that which Sir H. Bulwer knew perfectly well already, nor was I obliged to use the forms which would be proper in addressing the Spanish Government." But then what became of the despatch of the 19th of April, and also the despatch of the 20th of April, in which the noble Lord had signified his approval of the course pursued by Sir H. Bulwer? If the despatch of the 16th of March was merely intended for Sir H.

Bulwer, then, he repeated, he could not blame the noble Lord if the noble Lord had not subsequently approved of Sir H. Bulwer's conduct. But what was this despatch of the 19th of April? It ran thus—addressed, of course, from Lord Palmerston to Mr. Bulwer:—

> "With reference to your despatch of the 10th instant, I have to inform you, that Her Majesty's Government approve the language which you held to Queen Christina on the 4th instant, pointing out to Her Majesty the importance of governing Spain by constitutional means; and that Her Majesty's Government likewise approve of the note which you addressed on the 7th instant to the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs, offering similar counsel to the present Ministers of her Catholic Majesty."

He confessed that after this despatch he could not see how the noble Lord could defend himself on the ground that the despatch of the 16th of March was not intended for presentation. If it had been shown that our Ambassador at Madrid had merely committed an error of judgment, to which the ablest men were occasionally liable—if he had, under an erroneous impression of his duty, communicated this despatch to the Spanish Government, he did not think it would have been at all inconsistent with the dignity of the noble Lord to have disclaimed and regretted that course. The noble Lord might admit the error, although he approved of the motive. But the noble Lord commended Sir H. Bulwer for his conduct in presenting the despatch in question, although that document was undoubtedly written in a tone calculated to give pain, and he must say to cause offence. He could very well understand how the conduct of the noble Lord might be excused as regarded the despatch of the 16th March separately; but, taking that despatch in conjunction with that of the 20th of April, he confessed he could not see how the noble Lord could acquit himself on both together. There was a most important point yet to be considered as to the grounds of the Spanish Government for having expelled Sir Henry Bulwer from Madrid, and in reference to which the information was as yet most incomplete. The noble Lord had promised further papers; and he could not but think the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Bankes) would have exercised a sound discretion if he had postponed his Motion until those papers had been laid upon the table of the House. They were at present discussing that question in the dark—in a state of obscurity and eclipse, which could not be perpetual, and which the noble Lord (Lord Palmerston) had promised to remove. He did not doubt that, whilst negotiations were pending with a foreign Power, the noble Lord was justified in withholding despatches until those negotiations had been brought to a conclusion; but he wished, as far as he was concerned, that they had not been forced into a discussion at a time when they could not decide in a satisfactory manner—at a moment when the national honour was at stake, and when there was a determination to suffer no affront from any foreign Power—he wished, he repeated, that upon so momentous an occasion they had not been invited to decide upon conjecture instead of certainty. In this state of the case, finding that no information was before the House as to the grounds upon which the Spanish Government acted in the dismissal of Sir H. Bulwer, it would not become him to give any opinion to the House; but this he would state, that so far as the papers before them were concerned, he could not find in them any justification whatever for the Spaniards in dismissing the Ambassador of that very Power which had so much and so lately befriended them. They should have borne in mind the not very remote time when we stepped forward to assist them with our blood, with our treasure, with our moral influence; and it should have been some very strong provocation indeed which would justify so great an outrage upon their part. He must again say that in those papers there was no such justification—not the shadow of a justification. He did not of course, presume to say what other facts the Spanish Government could bring forward, for, as he had already stated, they had not all the documents of its defence before them. Some allowance was to be made for its just displeasure at the terms of the noble Lord, in his despatch of the 16th of March; terms which would naturally occasion irritation on the part of the Spanish Government. He contended, however, that, as far as they could judge of the present facts, and entirely reserving his decision upon any new facts which might be adduced, there never was an act so offensive in itself, and of such great consequence, undertaken upon such slight grounds. This act—dismissing an Ambassador—was not altogether without parallel. We had committed this act ourselves by the dismissal of the Swedish Ambassador, Count Gyllenborg, in 1717. But Count Gyllenborg was dismissed because he had been in correspondence with the Pretender. Papers connecting him with the cause of the Pretender were seized. It was a daring act to dismiss the Ambassador, but it was justified by the emergency; and the Spanish Government would be justified if they could show a similar cause. Yes, if the Spanish Government could show anything like such grounds, that House would not, from its attachment to any party, Government, or person, blame them for the course they had pursued. But as far as he could see at present, no such justification was alleged; and he might venture to say, that if there was no such justification, no party differences in that House—no feeling of any kind—would prevent all the Members of that House from concurring in any course which the vindication of our national honour might call upon us to pursue. It remained to be considered whether the House should adopt the Motion brought forward by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Dorsetshire. He would at once say that he could not concur with it. To vote with the hon. Gentleman, would be, however it might be disguised, a vote of censure. The words of the Motion, it was true, were, that the House expressed its regret; but "regret," in such a case, meant nothing more or less than censure. He had already touched upon those points in the despatches which he thought unwise. He would again say, that he regretted that such terms had been used; but let it be borne in mind what would be the consequences of the House agreeing to a Motion such as that proposed by the hon. Gentleman. He might admit that our position was a "humiliating" one, as it was termed in the Motion; but he was not prepared to say that that position had not been brought about rather by the unjust suspicion of the Spanish Government than by any default in our diplomacy. For these reasons he could not concur in the Motion of the hon. and learned Gentleman, and although he thought the despatch of the noble Lord open to animadversion, yet when he knew that the immediate consequences of the Motion, if carried tonight, would be the immediate retirement of the noble Lord at the head of Foreign Affairs and his Colleagues—and when he recollected the want of information, the deficiency in the materials for arriving at a proper conclusion—he thought the House of Commons could not with due regard to its own dignity and to the interests of the country, concur in the Motion of the hon. Gentleman. He must, therefore, express his dissent from the vote proposed for their adoption. Again, expressing his regret at the course pursued by the noble Lord (Lord Palmerston) in some of these transactions, he must say that he did not think the House would be taking that course which it was consistent with the vindication of the honour of the country to pursue, if, without the documents necessary to arrive at a proper conclusion upon this matter, they agreed in the Motion of the hon. and learned Gentleman.

Lord J. RUSSELL: The noble Lord who has just down has spoken so truly—he has expressed his doubts, where he has doubts, so candidly—his approbation where he can give it, so fairly—and his reluctance to agree to a vote of censure, in terms so becoming to the Members of this House—that I cannot refrain from at once rising to endeavour to give some information upon those points on which he is, as yet, uninformed. The noble Lord is willing to admit, and I think the great majority of this House must be willing to admit, that even putting aside the peculiar relations which subsist between this country and Spain, it is competent for one Government to give advice to the Government of another country. It may even feel at times bound to give advice with regard to its internal affairs. Provided that advice is conveyed in friendly terms, and it has a friendly object, there are few Members of this House who would deny there may be occasions upon which such advice may be given. Without referring to the innumerable examples which may be found where such advice has been given by persons of the highest authority in all matters of international relation, I will mention one case that I happened to be reading, I think not more than two or three days ago, with regard to the late events in Naples. A person of high authority sent for three of the foreign Ministers, informing them that tranquillity was restored in the capital. One of them, taking upon himself to speak on behalf of his Colleagues, the other foreign Ministers, said that their opinion was, that the time had come when their own conclusions should be considered by the Sovereign and by the Government. Who was the Minister that ventured, unasked, to give this advice to the Government of Naples? It was the representative of Her Catholic Majesty the Queen of Spain. Subsequent discussions occurred with one of the Ministers of the King of Naples, in which the nature of the constitution, and the propriety of dissolving the Chambers, were laid before those foreign Ministers. Various opinions were given—the Spanish Minister giving one opinion, the English Minister giving another; but it never occurred to the Minister of the King of Naples to say, "Any advice upon the internal affairs of this kingdom is an unjustifiable interference, and I call upon you to refrain from such interference, unless you wish me to give advice with regard to the mode of conducting the Governments of England and Spain." But, Sir, there were, as the noble Lord admits, peculiar reasons why England should have some title to give advice to the Government of Spain. Her interests had been too deeply concerned when the Marquess of Miraflores came here to pray, to beg, to supplicate for assistance—her assistance had been given too readily—her assistance had been too effectual, for her not to think that if the occasion arose when the Throne of the Queen of Spain should be endangered, her sympathy might be exhibited, her friendly counsels might be tendered, without fear of arousing any national susceptibility. Sir, the events of the present year have been extraordinary. My right hon. Friend the Master of the Mint, who went through this case so ably and so clearly, and altogether in a manner so masterly that I can add little to what he has addressed to the House, has referred most aptly to the despatch of my noble Friend in 1846, in which my noble Friend says, "Such are the sentiments of the British Government; and you will inform those who have the power to act according to those sentiments, but you will not intrude any advice with respect to the internal affairs of Spain." But, as I have said, the events of the present year have been most extraordinary, and there was no country hardly which could be considered to be safe from those convulsions which have overset thrones, have destroyed constitutions, have placed towns at the mercy of the mob, and have threatened to convulse the whole state of Europe. At such a time it was impossible, considering the relations between this country and Spain, that the fate of Spain should not seriously and painfully attract the attention of the British Government. My noble Friend wrote the despatch of the 16th of March. The noble Lord opposite (Lord Mahon) asks—and it is a perfectly justifiable question to ask—whether that despatch was written with the view of being communicated to the Spanish Government, or whether it was written for the information of Sir Henry Bulwer? Now, Sir, I shall answer that question by relating the events as they occurred. My noble Friend wrote that despatch, which is not in its form a despatch to be communicated in a note to a foreign Government. It was a despatch written in that form which is intended for the information of a Minister; but, at the same time, that despatch was for the information and guidance of a Minister who had been chosen for his eminent abilities, who was fully acquainted with the state of Spain, and in whom, therefore, the Government of this country might wisely repose confidence. Sir H. Bulwer evidently understood that despatch as it was meant, as a despatch for his guidance; but there occurred a state of things which filled him with alarm as to the safety of the Throne of Spain, the circumstances of which he has described in a despatch dated the 22nd of April. In that despatch he relates that extraordinary powers were obtained by the Spanish Government—that the Cortes were prorogued—that no sooner were they prorogued than almost every officer of note in the Progressista party was arrested or banished, and some of the most distinguished deputies were seized and imprisoned with an apparent intent to deport them, and all this without the parties thus treated being told of their offence, or submitted to any sort of trial. Now, on this part of the case, I must say that I believe it to have been the opinion of Sir H. Bulwer—for we have seen it frankly stated in despatches and letters of his—that the best policy for the Queen of Spain to pursue would be to unite, if possible, in her councils, the most eminent of those who would support her title as opposed to the title of Don Carlos—and that whether called Moderados or Progressistas, it was her interest to see her throne surrounded by both of those parties, and to make of those parties, united, a rampart, as it were, against the attempts of those who would support the pretensions of another prince. Whether that were a just opinion or not, I have no occasion now to argue. I will only say that it was an opinion formed by Sir H. Bulwer, not from any regard for one party or the other—not from any desire to take a part in the internal policy of Spain—but from a wish to see the Throne of Spain strengthened, and the title of the present Queen affirmed and recognised by the nation. Sir, with those opinions, therefore, the House can well conceive that Sir H. Bulwer saw with alarm that not only was an extraordinary law passed suspending all the guarantees of public liberty, but that the most eminent men who had held Progressista opinions in the Cortes—men who were distinguished orators, and men of known attainments and character—were seized and imprisoned without a trial, and were threatened with the loss of their liberty wherever they might be. Such being the case, then, Sir H. Bulwer was afraid that the partisans of Don Carlos, or the partisans of a Republic, might make a successful insurrection; and upon this point he says—

> "It began to be very probable that the Count Montemolin might show himself, supported by the Liberal party, and with the cry of the constitution of 1812—this was here canvassed on one side, a republic on the other."

In the previous passage he said—

> "In this state of circumstances I consulted my instructions. I had already acted upon them by giving friendly and intimate advice, without any effect being produced."

That shows—and I believe the noble Lord is satisfied of the fact—that Sir H. Bulwer really understood those instructions as authorising him to use "friendly and intimate advice" with the Government of Spain, without immediately producing the note which authorised him to do so. Under the circumstances of the case, however, to which he has referred, Sir H. Bulwer thought that if he went no further, no record would remain of that advice having been given. He reflected that the advice had been given in the course of conversation merely, and that no one would know that it had been given; and it seemed to him that for the sake of the British Government, in order that it might appear that we had left no warning that we could adopt untried—that we had not allowed recklessly the Throne of the Queen of Spain to be subverted, and that at all events we should be justified if that throne were placed in peril—with those opinions, and under those circumstances, he then wrote to the Duke of Sotomayor, and enclosed the despatch of my noble Friend. Sir, those are the circumstances which account, first, for the despatch being written in terms which I think are shorter and more abrupt than those which my noble Friend would have used in writing a note that was purposely intended to be communicated to the Spanish Government; and they also account for the conduct of Sir H. Bulwer in afterwards delivering that note to the Government of Spain. Now, what course were we to take upon this occasion? It was not originally intended that that note should be delivered to the Spanish Government; but Sir H. Bulwer acted upon his discretion, and we had to consider whether he had acted properly upon that discretion; and it was the consideration of Her Majesty's Government that he had acted properly upon that discretion, and that he deserved the approbation of the Government for the mode in which he had discharged his duty. And I think, Sir, it would have been a bad course indeed if, taking advantage of any technical point, having a person like Sir H. Bulwer at Madrid, who had been there for years, and who was well acquainted with that country, we had said to him, "You were not instructed to give in that note to the Spanish Government, and therefore your conduct must be disproved." Sir, I think we should have been lowering the Government of this country if we had so acted, and that we were right in sharing the responsibility with Sir H. Bulwer, or rather in taking upon ourselves the greater part of the responsibility, because the hon. Gentleman who made the Motion to-night is quite right in saying that, if censure there is to be, let that censure fall upon the Government at home, and not upon the agent who followed their instructions abroad. We have, therefore, taken the greater share of that responsibility—and we are here to justify that conduct, to stand responsible for it: to be acquitted if it should please the House to acquit us; to be censured, if it should please the House to censure us; but at all events not denying, or in any way evading, that responsibility which properly belongs to us. Sir, the despatch of my noble Friend, approving of the conduct of Sir H. Bulwer, has been found fault with on another ground; and it has been said that after such an affront—after an act of discourtesy seldom suffered by any Minister as the despatch of the Secretary of State being returned—it was quite undignified of my noble Friend not to fall into a great passion upon this subject, and to resent most deeply, and in very pompous terms, and perhaps, with acts of an extreme nature, the indignity that had been put upon us. Why, Sir, I think that my noble Friend took a much better course in explaining that what was done was meant as a friendly warning—that it was not a matter for our partial interference—that it was a matter for the Government of Spain to consider—that we had acted with the most friendly intentions—and that if she chose to be angry, we did not intend to be offended about the matter. I remember once the late Lord Holland telling me a story of Lord Archibald Hamilton, who was to dine at Holland-house, and had been shown into a room with a gentleman with whom he was not acquainted. Lord Holland said that Lord Archibald Hamilton went up to him with no little agitation, and said, "This gentleman, whom I don't know, has said such things to me that I must either burst out laughing, or knock him down." Lord Holland replied, "By all means, then, burst out laughing, and don't knock him down." So I think it was in the case of my noble Friend. He must either have taken this up as a great national quarrel, or have passed it by as a matter of no importance. But, Sir, there are other matters connected with this despatch of my noble Friend; and it is said that we ought not to have reminded the Government of Spain of the obligations under which that Government lay to this Government and to this country. I entirely differ from that opinion. I do not think, if the Government of Spain had really consulted the interests of the Queen whom they serve, that they would have given such an air as the Duke de Sotomayor gave to the note of Sir H. Bulwer. I think that whatever their opinion was—whether they thought the advice uncalled for, whether they thought it injurious, or whatever other opinion they might have had—they, the representatives of the Queen of Spain, should have been themselves too mindful of the obligations under which the Queen of Spain and her Government lay to the assistance of England to have made it a matter of reproach and taunt, and puerile sarcasm, that we had given advice to them with respect to their internal government. But as they did so, they were fairly met with the answer that the position was a totally different one, and that the Queen of England was under no such obligations to Spain as the Queen of Spain was under to this country. All my observations are founded on papers already laid before the House. Sir, the hon. Gentleman who brought forward this Motion has chosen to do so, thinking it wise and proper, whilst negotiations are still going on between the representatives of Spain at this Court and Her Majesty's Government, not only to ask for information, not only to bring on a discussion, but he has thought it the proper moment for moving a vote of censure upon the conduct of Her Majesty's Government. Though we could not ask the hon. Gentleman to put off his Motion—though we could not show the least appearance of a desire to avoid that vote of censure—yet I cannot agree with him that it is at all proper to bring forward such vote whilst matters stand as they do between Spain and this country; and I think, whatever Government might be in power, supposing the House of Commons to adopt such a vote, that it could not but weaken, I will not say the particular Ministry, but, any Ministry, whoever they might be, in their attempts to effect a satisfactory negotiation. With regard to our relations with Spain, I think that they are not only very peculiar and very delicate, but that whilst they require that English honour should be maintained, they do at the same time require the exercise of very great forbearance. Perhaps if the two countries were more upon a level in point of force, it would be more difficult or more liable to suspicion, if that forbearance were shown; but standing as we do in the relation of England and of Spain—seeing what is the power of England and what is now the power of Spain—I think that we are not only justified, but that we are bound to show the utmost temper and forbearance in our dealings with that country. I trust we shall take care that no stain shall fall upon the honour of England. Anything but that I would be ready to submit to for the purpose of maintaining the most friendly relations with Spain. If I am unable to vouch that they have had any justification, as far as I have yet seen, for the peremptory and violent step that has been taken with regard to Sir H. Bulwer, yet I must also consider that there is the Queen of Spain, whose throne I most heartily wish to see maintained, whose security upon that throne I trust will not be endangered —that there is the Spanish nation, a nation of as gallant sentiments and of as chivalrous feelings as Britain herself; and whilst I think that the Queen of Spain has placed the concerns of the nation in hands wanting in temper, wanting in discretion, wanting in due regard for a faithful and generous ally, and whilst I must think that that Spanish nation has but imperfect organs for the expressions of its will in the Duke of Valencia and the Duke de Sotomayor, yet in all we may do, in all we may find it necessary in future to write upon this subject, we will not forget that while such are the temporary representatives of Spain, the interests of the Queen of Spain and the character of the Spanish nation are to be regarded by us with the utmost interest and consideration.

Mr. DISRAELI: Sir, it would be difficult, in following the debate as hitherto conducted, for any one who had not been previously acquainted with what has occurred between this country and Spain, easily to conceive what really has happened. Is it possible to imagine that a gross outrage has been committed — a gross public outrage, and under circumstances of unprecedented flagrancy, upon an individual whom, both from the position he occupies, and the public estimation he has acquired, was one in whose career, conduct, and treatment, this country must naturally feel a great interest? Would any one have imagined that a foreign country had dismissed the representative of the Queen of Great Britain almost ignominiously from its capital—that he had arrived here hurried and in haste—that the circumstances that led to this outrage had only transpired, originally, to the English House of Commons through foreign newspapers; that it was with the utmost difficulty any public notice of these events should have occurred in this House—the chosen temple of national rights and national honour; and that when at last, on an occasion most constitutional and legitimate, some notice is taken of it, the Prime Minister should tell us that negotiations are going on? Why, Sir, that is the great fault we find with Her Majesty's Ministers in the present state of affairs. I want to know, after this outrage has been committed, why a full and complete satisfaction has not long before this been exacted? I say this is a question totally independent of the policy of the Government, or the character of the English Minister. It is this primary condition which we ought to notice—it is this primary condition which we ought to demand to be fulfilled, before we enter into the question of the policy of the Government, or of the conduct of the Minister. We have been favoured with the reasons why the representative of Her Majesty was dismissed with shame and dishonour from the capital of Spain. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs at Madrid most graciously and courteously informed Sir Henry Bulwer that he (Sir Henry Bulwer) was abused in the Spanish press, and in the Spanish Parliament, and that the Government of Spain could not answer for his safety at Madrid, and he therefore sent him his passport; and the Under Secretary of State, as Sir Henry entered his carriage, was ready to assure him of his high consideration! Yet, negotiations are going on! Why, Sir, the reasons have been given for the dismissal of Sir Henry Bulwer from Madrid. Do you find them satisfactory? That is the whole question before the House. Is the message of the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs at Madrid, or is the speech of the Duke de Sotomayor—are they an ample satisfaction to you for this unprecedented outrage? Why, Sir, we are told that a distinguished gentleman left Madrid twenty-four hours before the English Minister, in order, in detail, completely to satisfy the Court of St. James's of the expediency and unavoidable necessity of the unprecedented step the Spanish Government had taken. But, according to every principle of public law, and according to the practice of nations in their mutual and reciprocal conduct, that circumstance would not have been a justification of the step which the Spanish Cabinet adopted. The official arrived; and that the grounds he had to assign for the step taken by the Spanish government were unquestionably unsatisfactory, Her Majesty's Ministers must no doubt have been aware. But I can understand why the British Government may feel that a country like Great Britain could afford to be generous, and cherish generosity even to the verge of contemptuousness. All that I could understand and allow. If Her Majesty's Ministers had ever any suspicion, notwithstanding the formal politeness of the despatch of the Spanish Minister—and notwithstanding the verbal message of the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Sir H. Bulwer—notwithstanding these formal circumstances, that still there were accusations in detail which could be proved with facility against a man who had hitherto stood in the high and responsible position of Her Majesty's Minister Plenipotentiary at Madrid, I could understand why a Secretary of State should have said to Spain, "Notwithstanding you should have communicated to us through the Spanish Minister here those grounds of complaint which you had to allege before you inflicted, in the face of Europe and the civilised world, this unparalleled outrage on the representative of the British

Sovereign, still we are prepared to hear, if, after all, it can be explained and apologised for." Well, where is this Extraordinary Minister from Madrid, who came over the day after the insult was inflicted to vindicate the outrage? Has he ever applied to the noble Lord? The noble Lord said—" A person came over here, but he was not accredited to me, and I declined to receive him, and told him that if he had anything to say he must communicate it through the Spanish Minister—but with this condition, that the communication must be made in writing." The noble Lord in this instance departed from the laws of nations, and from the rules of public propriety, I think, too much for his own self-respect. I should like to know what business he had to receive in writing any representation as to foreign affairs from persons who were not accredited to the Government of this country? I want to know who this person—this Mr. Mirasol, who is still in London, is. Has he anything to say? If he has, and he cannot find a Secretary of State courteous enough to listen to him, still he might meet with an audience in a House of Commons. If he is the accredited representative of his Sovereign at Madrid, and has any statement to make, let him make it. Has he communicated it to any one in writing, or orally? Who is he? What is he? Why is he here? Why is his name bruited about? Why is this anomalous authority quoted on this occasion? The time is come to know who this person is, and whether he, or any one else, is ready to vindicate this great and unparalleled outrage. Before you enter into any question of policy, that question ought first to be resolved. If he had been accredited to the noble Lord, and had made his communication, it would by this time, I doubt not, have been on the table of the House. If, taking advantage of the too indulgent permission of the noble Lord, he had communicated in writing to the Spanish Minister—if he could have written anything worth listening to—if he composed, with the Spanish Minister, without a blushing front, anything that could be offered for the acceptance of the noble Lord, it would now have been on the table of this House. It ought to have been there ten days ago. Why did he not get here sooner? He might have been here twenty-four hours before the late English Minister at Madrid; and when that English Minister arrived at the Clarendon, or at Mivart's, the letter of this Mr. Mirasol might have been sent to him, and the whole matter might have been at once settled. After all the delay that has occurred in this affair, I have a right to infer that the Spanish Government have no accusation whatever to make against the English Minister; and, except the expulsion of Sir Henry Bulwer from Madrid, I can conceive no outrage greater than that they should send a person over here to circulate these rumours without being ready to substantiate them, and to allege circumstances respecting the British Minister at Madrid which had never been before heard of, and which, from the high character of that gentleman, can never be believed. This outrage, then, ought first to be noticed; and I impugn a Government who could allow themselves to look into negotiations of any kind without an explanation. Before they entered into negotiations on any point, the honour and character of the country ought to have been vindicated. If the noble Lord did not choose to send Mr. Mirasol his passport within twenty-four hours after his arrival here, and which I think, as a retaliation for the dismissal of Sir Henry Bulwer, he might have justly done, he might at least have proved that there was some use in the new Alien Bill, and sent Mr. Mirasol about his business. It is of importance, in the first place, to trace this outrage to its cause, though I believe it to be totally without a cause—dismissing for the present from our minds whatever our opinions or views may be—all considerations as to Spanish politics, and keeping our eyes attentively upon the fact, that a gross outrage has been inflicted upon this country. That we ought never to forget. It is one of the first duties of the House of Commons to be very jealous of the honour of public Ministers intrusted in foreign countries to act on behalf of this. Diplomatists are the most forlorn of men. There are very few who find their way into the House of Commons. However injured by a Minister, however misrepresented by a Minister in Parliament, it would be fatal to any one to speak against the conduct of his political chief. A scapegoat is a useful character in all transactions; and no scapegoat is more easy to select than the man who has been chosen to transact business in a foreign scene, at a distant time, and connected with circumstances with which we cannot be familiar. The non-answering of a letter, or the presentation of a letter not duly authorised, or not considered as duly authorised, may be held as exonerating the character of a whole Cabinet, and save it from a future Parliamentary censure. I make that observation generally, and not in reference to the present case. I am willing to believe that Her Majesty's Ministers are not going to desert one of the most honest servants of the Crown. I say this notwithstanding the observations which the noble Lord has just addressed to the House, and who tells us that he and his Colleagues are prepared to take their share of the responsibility; and afterwards, ameliorating and cherishing his phraseology, he assured us that Her Majesty's Ministers are even prepared to take upon them the greater part of the responsibility. I tell the noble Lord that Her Majesty's Ministers must take upon themselves the responsibility, and the whole responsibility. [Lord J. RUSSELL: I said so.] I am willing to believe that the noble Lord meant that. I am gratified to understand that that which the noble Lord did say was totally different to that which my ears at first led me to believe. I am perfectly ready to accept the expression of the noble Lord in that sense; but of this let me remind the House—I am not rising to defend Sir H. Bulwer, because in the whole course of the debate, I am glad to observe, notwithstanding the doubtful expression of the noble Lord, an expression which he has since satisfactorily explained, Sir H. Bulwer has not been attacked—I mean not by Her Majesty's Government, but he has been outraged and insulted by the Government of Spain; and, although the Government may be willing to take upon themselves the responsibility, still they cannot take away from Sir H. Bulwer any part of the outrage which has been inflicted upon him. On an occasion like the present, before entering into the causes which led to these unparalleled and insufferable transactions, or into any explanations of the policy of the Government, or of the policy of the Minister more immediately concerned in this country, we ought, at least—unless good ground can be shown to the contrary, but which I maintain cannot be shown—we ought to show, irrespective of party, that the House of Commons is determined to uphold any Minister abroad, who, they believe, has done his duty, and done it well. The gentleman whose name has been called to our consideration tonight, is one who, however painful the discussion must be to his feelings, and perilous as it would be to many others, ought not to be afraid to meet an English Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman the Master of the Mint has eloquently described the merits of Sir H. Bulwer. I cannot describe those merits in the glowing terms which the right hon. Gentleman's eloquence has furnished; but I can say that it has been my fortune to find Sir H. Bulwer as Minister in several foreign countries, where he was engaged in important transactions of State; and I believe that no man has of late years been employed by the Government to serve Her Majesty abroad who has done better service to the Crown, or who has shown more sagacity, more penetration, and — notwithstanding these transitory circumstances—I will say, more conciliatory temper, than Sir Henry Bulwer. No man has succeeded more, under circumstances of great difficulty, and great political niceness, than that gentleman. He eminently succeeded at Constantinople. With regard to the events of 1840, the extraordinary occurrences which have happened within the last few months, permit what was called the other night a private Member of Parliament to speak upon these subjects in a way in which he might not otherwise have spoken; and I will say, that the conduct of Sir H. Bulwer in 1840, with respect to the information he obtained, and the advice—founded on the finest personal observation, and the most extensive acquaintance with public men in Paris—which he afforded to the noble Lord, was of very signal service to the Crown of England, and to the fortunes of this country. I am not sure that the labours of that gentleman had not a very material effect in preventing war at that time; and his appointment to the Court of Madrid was the reward of his eminent achievements in the year 1840. But by whom was he promoted? Not by the noble Lord, who was most conscious of his merits, and who, I believe I may say, was most anxious to acknowledge them. It was the archives of the Foreign Office—the register of his distinguished services—that induced Lord Aberdeen, when he succeeded the noble Lord in office, to fix upon Sir H. Bulwer as the man best qualified, both by his natural talents, and his acquired experience, to fill what was at that moment the most difficult and responsible post in our diplomacy. This circumstance alone affords *primâ facie* evidence of Sir H. Bulwer's capacity and conduct. Without entering into the peculiar policy of the noble Lord opposite, I may remind the House that Sir H. Bulwer acted for a considerable period under Lord Aberdeen, who was supposed to have pursued a line of policy different from that adopted by the noble Lord. I am not speaking under what the right hon. Master of the Mint (Mr. Sheil) called the inspiration of Lord Aberdeen, or any of his late Colleagues. But I speak on unquestionable authority, when I say, that the conduct of Sir H. Bulwer, when he was at Madrid, under the instructions of Lord Aberdeen, will at least prove, that he was not one who was anxious to develop a party and factious policy; and that he did not attain to office, and did not maintain himself in office, by pandering to any prurient feelings of the noble Lord in favour of a particular course of policy in Spain. Under Lord Aberdeen, Sir Henry Bulwer obeyed his instructions, and developed and carried them out, with great tact and with great adroitness, by favour of that discretion which was intrusted to him, both by the late and present Secretaries for Foreign Affairs. I feel it my duty to express my earnest opinions on this subject, because I know, whatever may be the decision we may come to upon the present question—whatever may be the opinions that may be most popular, as far as majorities in this House are concerned, upon what is called foreign policy in general—it is of the utmost importance that we should show to Europe that our party quarrels do not prevent us from perfectly appreciating the conduct of public men who have been engaged in the service of the country. Having said this, let us conceive what must be the position of such a man as Sir H. Bulwer, after such an outrage, arriving in England, remaining in England now I believe nearly a fortnight, and having received no public recognition of his services, and no testimony of the sympathy of his fellow-countrymen. I was going to say—think what must be the feelings of such an individual; but I would say rather, think what must be the interests of this country. How must they suffer at this period, when the world is governed only by opinion, and when it is the opinion of the power, the high moral conduct, and the great public spirit of England, that is the most necessary element in your system of managing public affairs. Think how that opinion for which you have sacrificed so much, which you have cherished at so much cost, and which you must depend upon as a better arm than your fleets or your troops to maintain peace—think how that opinion must have suffered when such an outrage has been committed on such a man—when such a term has elapsed, since his arrival in this country, before his countrymen have expressed their opinion upon his conduct, and upon the behaviour of a foreign Court towards him. Think how that opinion must be affected when, an attempt being made in a manner most legitimate and constitutional by a Member of the Opposition in this House, to bring forward, on Committee of Supply, a great public grievance—and I am at a loss to understand what is a public grievance if this is not a public grievance—an insult to your Sovereign, an insult to yourselves, an insult to the nation at large; think, I say, how that opinion, on which you so much rely, must suffer when, on the attention of Parliament being called to these circumstances, we are coolly told by the noble Lord at the head of the Government that negotiations are going on. Going on, for what? To receive fresh insults? We have a Secretary of Legation at Madrid; do you want him to receive his passports? The more you negotiate, the more certain you are to receive fresh insults. I form that opinion from the documents which have been so obligingly placed before us. Sir H. Bulwer delivers a despatch, and makes certain friendly remonstrances to the Spanish Government. This creates offence. The Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs retorts in a despatch distinguished by some acerbity, and not written without ability. What happens then? A Member of the British Government, in another place, takes the earliest opportunity to regret the conduct pursued by Sir H. Bulwer. Why, that is the whole cause of the miserable incident that afterwards occurred. Deeply do I regret that a nobleman so distinguished as Lord Lansdowne, so eminent for his knowledge, his experience, his temper and tone in political affairs, and the large and enlightened views he takes upon all subjects, should have been the means of inflicting such a stigma upon a British Minister. But suppose this statement had not been made by the Lord President of the Council; suppose it had been made by a Minister not so eminent, it might then have been thought that the speaker had been influenced by feelings not so amiable towards the noble Foreign Secretary as those by which Lord Lansdowne was no doubt actuated, the circumstance might have been understood, and the result would not have been so noxious. But when one of our first public men, second to few in ability, second to none in public character, comes forward in a place so eminent as the House of Lords, and declines to justify the conduct of a British Minister, who can doubt that the persons who dared to hint dislike before would hesitate afterwards to accomplish the foul outrage the House is now called upon to discuss? We are told that it was the despatch of the noble Lord opposite that did all the mischief. Did the noble Lord mean it to be so? Did he not know what he was writing? Was he so hurried by the agitated condition of Europe, with every capital in insurrection, and every nation in revolt, that he forgot to mention in a postscript that the despatch was not to be shown? No, it was not the despatch of the noble Lord that did this mischief, it was the speech of his Colleague in another place. All the despatches that were ever written might easily have been obeyed—might easily have been managed; their ill effects might have been removed by a diplomatist of the tried experience, and, above all, of the perfect temper which is the great characteristic—and one most important in a person occupying such a position—of Sir H. Bulwer. Here is the despatch which has been so much criticised, dated the 16th of March. It is headed, as you all know, "Confidential;" and it states, that—

> "The recent fall of the King of the French and of his whole family, and the expulsion of his Ministers, ought to teach the Spanish Court and Government how great is the danger of an attempt to govern a country in a manner at variance with the feelings and opinions of the nation; and the catastrophe which has happened in France must serve to show that even a large and well-disciplined army becomes an ineffectual defence for the Crown, when the course pursued by the Crown is at variance with the general sentiments of the country."

Why, it is like reading a passage out of Gibbon. Some persons write despatches for work; this is for show. Nothing could be more ridiculous than that a man of such experience as the noble Lord—one too who has so long had the good fortune of being in the House of Commons, which prevents a man becoming too stilted—should write to his confidential agents these sesquipedalian sentences. The letter is an excellent letter for its purpose. It was written to a country where they like grand sentences. Had the despatch been longer, and in the same style, it might have prevented the disagreeable events that have occurred. But though the noble Lord was obliged to be epigrammatic, his style is high Castilian. It is totally impossible that this despatch could have been meant for any other eyes than those of the Duke de Sotomayor or General Narvaez. But then it is said, it was a confidential despatch; yes, and it was confidentially communicated. Sir H. Bulwer was told to seize an occasion for communicating its contents, especially to the Queen Mother; and from what I have observed of the career and know of the character of Sir H. Bulwer, I am satisfied that the opportunities of which he availed himself would be most discreetly chosen. But these communications were probably made in French, and it is not easy to convey in the French language the grandiose style of the noble Lord; and as a sceptical ear was turned to these implied menaces, however softened by his phraseology, Sir H. Bulwer at last felt that the occasion was ripe for showing that he was in earnest. How was he to show it? After pressing the effect of his despatch upon the Queen Mother and the Spanish Court for twenty days without effect, finding that they did not give credence to his statements, or rather insinuations, the English Envoy had to consider what course it was best for him to take, to convince them that he was authorised to make these representations. Suppose Sir H. Bulwer had written a formal note, commencing, "The undersigned has the honour to inform the Duke de Sotomayor that he has been instructed to forward," &c., it would probably have had little more effect than his conversations; and if this step had failed, he would have been responsible to his Government for not having used his discretion, and shown the letter of his principal. The only chance of success, according to his rational calculation, was to prove that, during the whole time he had been making these conversational insinuations, he was only, with great tact and temper, expressing the absolute instructions he had received in an official despatch from the English Secretary of State. At the last moment, therefore, Sir H. Bulwer confidentially communicated this note, marked "confidential," to the Spanish Minister. Now, after this conduct, which only could have been pursued by a man who to great experience adds a happy talent for the profession in which he is engaged, I certainly am surprised that it should have been said in the House of Lords that the letter was confidential, and that it was to be regretted that Sir H. Bulwer had been indiscreet enough to show it. But the affair becomes absolutely absurd—nay, more than absurd, most noxious in the eye of Europe—when we find that by the same post which conveyed the English journals containing these remarks of the Lord President of the Council, Sir H. Bulwer received a despatch from the British Government expressing their entire approval of his conduct, which despatch he had to produce to the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs. This, then, is the position in which Sir H. Bulwer was placed, and it is that position which is the key to all these unfortunate circumstances. And now I come to inquire—and that is the important business of the night—why this misunderstanding took place between Members of the same Cabinet? This brings me to the policy of the noble Lord. It has been frankly avowed by the right hon. Gentleman the Master of the Mint, who seemed to glory in the circumstance, that all this is the necessary consequence of the Quadruple Treaty. That right hon. Gentleman appeared to hold up the Quadruple Treaty as the Magna Charta of diplomacy. He says it is out of that treaty that our duties and our rights with respect to Spain have flowed. It is, he observes, by the Quadruple Treaty that we bound the crown upon the brow of the Queen of Spain. A flattering memento this, let me remind the right hon. Gentleman, to go by the next post to Madrid! At a time when we are told the Spanish nation have that high-born and natural sensitiveness that they cannot bear an allusion to the Peninsular War, and to those victories which redeemed their independence—softened as the recollection is by the lapse of more than thirty years, is it likely that the Spanish people can bear to have it said that their Sovereign owed her crown, not to the British nation, but to the British Minister. That, at any rate, is what we have been told to-night. Well, the Quadruple Treaty has produced all this mischief. I remember, when I first had the honour of entering this House, now too many years ago for me to care to recollect, if any Gentleman got up and made any derogatory allusions to the Quadruple Treaty, he was always received with unanimous derision. Any person who dared to insinuate that the Quadruple Treaty was not the most magnanimous monument, not of English diplomacy merely, but of the march of liberalism, and of the spread of liberal opinions, identifying Great Britain with the liberal cause throughout the world, was a Pariah in politics. But what was the Quadruple Treaty? It was the triumph of that liberalism which, whether developed in domestic or foreign affairs, is, alike fatal to liberty, and which has been the characteristic of the foreign policy of England for now too many years. The noble Lord opposite, who became Lord Grey's Foreign Secretary, necessarily from his position, was not only the organ and expounder, but, fortunately for him, the most able expounder, of this great diplomatic fallacy. The noble Lord opposite was then supported by the liberal party, and was especially supported by the liberal Members of the Cabinet. There was not an occasion on which we were not told, whenever any subject connected with our external affairs was brought under our eye, that England was to identify herself with the liberal cause, and with the growth of liberal institutions in foreign countries; and the noble Lord accepted power, and maintained himself in power, by the tenure of entertaining and advocating such opinions. This course of policy was announced to Parliament by a great master of rhetoric, in a way which persuaded everybody that this patronage of foreign liberalism would not lead to foreign war. Lord Grey's declaration on taking office in 1830 was as follows:—" Our true policy is to maintain universal peace." In this sentiment Lord Grey anticipated the hon. Member for the West Riding. There is nothing new, it seems, under the sun. Lord Grey, at that time, said—

> " Our true policy is to maintain universal peace, and, therefore, non-interference is the principle—the great principle—which ought to be and will be heartily adopted by the present Administration."

This, therefore, perfectly justified the statement of the hon. Member for Dorsetshire. No doubt, the hon. Member for Montrose still represents all those liberal ideas, and is of opinion that by meddling in every country you secure universal peace. Such, at least, was, at the time I refer to, the idea of the liberal party with respect to Foreign Affairs. My objection to liberalism is this—that it is the introduction into the practical business of life of the highest kind—namely, politics—of philosophical ideas instead of political principles. In fact, when a man goes to Madrid, for instance, he is not to guide his conduct with reference to the interests of England or of Spain, which, I hope, are mutual, but he is immediately to set about to infuse into a party, probably the weakest in the country, certain philosophical principles; and the promulgation of those principles is to be the bond of brotherhood with some small political faction, which, perhaps, would never have existed were it not for such fostering. The noble Lord opposite went on in this course. Who could blame him? You gave him immense majorities; though we, then a small party in this House, told you that it would never do, and that you could never conduct the foreign affairs of England on this system of abstract theories. You could not find a country governed by an absolute power without telling it that the only way to be happy and prosperous was to have a House of Lords and a House of Commons, and an English treaty of commerce. All this ended in confusion. All that was practical you never obtained. You never obtained the treaty of commerce, but you fostered confusion and convulsion. By lending all the aid of a great country like England to some miserable faction, you did create parties in domestic policy in every country, from Athens to Madrid, deteriorated the prosperity and condition of the people, and laid the seeds of infinite confusion. The noble Lord opposite proceeded in this course—the great prophet of liberalism in foreign affairs. I do the noble Lord the justice to say, that it was quite impossible for any man entertaining or advocating such absurd and perilous opinions to conduct their development in a more business-like manner: for the noble Lord has been educated in the best school, and is one of its most distinguished pupils. But the plot thickened; and, notwithstanding this fostering of constitutions in Greece, Portugal, and Spain; notwithstanding, even, that the noble Lord, on one of those very rare occasions when he deigns to open the oracle of the Foreign Office in this House, was forced by his party to come to the table of the House to connect France with the great liberal cause, and to assure us that France was our natural ally, and that the constitutional Governments of France and England might form such an alliance as would govern the world—the noble Lord found, as he went on, being a practical man, that the system would not work. How could it? During the last twenty years you have introduced a sentimental instead of a political principle into the conduct of your foreign affairs. The slave trade was to be abolished, and the noble Lord the Secretary of State appeared likely to embroil the whole world by forcing parties into treaties, without stopping to inquire whether the course pursued might not aggravate the horrors of slavery, and lay the seeds of endless misconceptions between us and Foreign Powers. I do not blame the noble Lord opposite. This was one of the tenures by which a Liberal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs held his office. The noble Lord set about it in the most business-like way; and I say that no other Secretary of State could have accomplished more treaties for the extinction of the slave trade, or have created more misconceptions, or have extricated himself with more adroitness. Well, the sentimental principle went on. You looked on the English constitution as a model farm. You forced this constitution in every country. You laid it down as a great principle that you were not to consider the interests of England, or the interests of the country you were in connexion with, but that you were to consider the great system of liberalism, which had nothing to do with the interests of England, and was generally antagonistic with the interests of the country with which you were in connexion. In 1839 and 1840 things began to get very serious. The noble Lord, than whom no one understands better the interests of this country, and than whom, if permitted, no one would vindicate them with more ability, was obliged to sacrifice, in the early part of the Reform Ministry, all our interests in the East. ["Question!"] This is the question, as I will show it to be. The noble Lord was obliged to sacrifice those interests of England because of his alliance with France; and what happened in 1839, and led to the affairs of 1840? The noble Lord found that he could not manage affairs with this sentimental alliance with France; and the hon. Gentleman who just called "Question" cannot understand Foreign Affairs if he supposes that the Spanish Minister turned the English representative out of Spain without reference to antecedent circumstances. The affairs of 1840 led to all this. The noble Lord found that this system of liberalism would not do; and, recurring to the practical principles in which he had been educated, he extricated himself from all the blunders he had committed in the Levant some years ago; and then arose that misconception with France, which is the origin of all we are now speaking about. In 1846, when the noble Lord by accident found himself called to power, what occurred? His intended Colleagues entered into an intrigue—into a disgraceful cabal—to keep the noble Lord out of the Cabinet. I am now speaking of circumstances with which I am acquainted, and am not dealing with rumours merely. Their plea for this conduct was the noble Lord's meddling policy, which had lost them the convenient friendship of France; but which was never discovered to be meddling while the noble Lord was developing liberalism for eight years, and sacrificing, to his intriguing Colleagues and his party, the interests of England. The noble Lord, however, found himself nearly the victim of as disgraceful an intrigue as ever existed in this country. I believe I speak accurately when I say that the noble Lord was anxious, on taking power, to conduct, if possible, public affairs with a good understanding with France. But how could the noble Lord have influence with France, when his own Colleagues did all they could to blacken his character in Europe? And when, on his accepting office, the creatures of the late Cabinet went to the Court of the Tuileries, and said, "You see the position of Lord Palmerston; his own Colleagues are against him, so all you have to do is to cross him in every way, and he must fall." That led, and that alone, to the unhappy difference between France and England. While I make this observation, it is impossible for me not to recur to the lamentable fall of one who, notwithstanding the events of the last three months, I must ever consider as a most able prince. And now the noble Lord, crossed in every way, finds himself forced to take up liberalism again. We, too, find the same results ensuing—confusion in every country with which we are connected, because we are not attempting to regulate our relations with those countries with any reference to our mutual interests, but because we adopt this dangerous principle of liberalism; and, consequently, we interfere in all their internal concerns, and not only frame constitutions for their acceptance, but we have arrived at this pitch—that we select Ministers for the administration of their affairs. These being my feelings on this subject, I am exceedingly loth to assent to any vote which singles out the noble Lord as the Member of the Government who has followed out a policy so pernicious to this country. We ought to strike at the system, and not at the individual. It is, no doubt, convenient to the noble Lord at the head of the Government to say, that this is a vote of censure upon the Government. I am sorry that a calm expression of opinion on the part of this House should be always called a vote of censure. But even if it be a vote of censure, like medicine it may be disagreeable, but the Government will be none the worse for it. I do not consider it would terminate their existence. At all events, we, by the force of circumstances, are obliged to express our opinion on one of the most remarkable events that ever happened in the diplomatic history of the country. But to get up and deliver a crude opinion upon it, without reference to its antecedents, would not be consistent with our duty or our interests. This expulsion of our Minister from Madrid is the result of that system of liberalism which has too long existed in the administration of foreign affairs, and should be accepted as the consequence of that system by this House. Our first duty, without any reference to any party whatever, is to express our sense of the gross and unprecedented outrage against the dignity of the Sovereign and the honour of the country. We have also to declare, in a marked and decided manner, that we will not permit an eminent public servant to be made the scapegoat of a mischievous policy. We are to show, whatever may be the consequences of this vote, if the question should come to a vote, that it is not an attack upon an individual Minister, but upon the system which, from circumstances, he has been too often and too long forced to develop and follow. Still less should such an attack be made when the individual Minister has heretofore, on a great historic occasion, had the courage, notwithstanding the opposition of his Colleagues, to depart from his system, and to vindicate the interests and the honour of our country.

Sir R. H. INGLIS was understood to say, that it was a fact unprecedented in the history of England that such an insult as the expulsion of Sir H. Bulwer from Madrid had been offered to the Crown of England in the person of one of its representatives; and he believed it was almost unparalleled in the diplomatic history of Europe. The more immediate question under discussion, was not whether England had the right to interfere under any circumstances in the affairs of Spain. That right must be conceded to some extent; otherwise what was the use of sending an Ambassador to the Court of Spain at all? With respect to the present case, he objected to the manner of the noble Lord's interference. Instead of confining himself to communicating the views of the English Government to the Queen of Spain, or to her responsible Ministers, he directs Sir H. Bulwer to communicate also with a Person who, of all the individuals of her sex in Europe, had obtained the most unhappy notoriety, and was the least entitled to enjoy the confidence of the English Government. [The hon. Baronet here read the passage from the despatch of March 16, which directed Sir H. Bulwer to communicate Viscount Palmerston's sentiments to Queen Christina.] He would ask the noble Lord what he would say if the Spanish Minister should authorise his Ambassador at the Court of St. James's to communicate his views not only to the Queen of England or to her Ministers, but to the Queen Dowager or the Duchess of Kent? Was not there not a close analogy between the two cases? It appeared also from the correspondence, that everything which the noble Lord desired, was in progress, if he had permitted the Spanish Minister to exercise the same discretion which he claimed for himself. He objected to that passage in the despatches in which Viscount Palmerston told the Spanish Minister that the English Government were not at all offended at the indignity which had been put upon the English Ambassador. He thought that under the circumstances the noble Lord, if he were not prepared to send passports to the Spanish Minister in London, ought, at the least, to have held a very different language in respect to the removal of Sir H. Bulwer from Madrid. If Sir Henry Bulwer deserved the approbation of his Government, why submit to his dismissal? If he did not, why allow so long an interval to pass without an effort to restore his position, or vindicate the honour of the country by requiring an apology from the Spanish Government? In any case, the Government appeared to be involved in difficulties from which it would not be easy for them to extricate themselves. He did not know whether the hon. Member for Dorset intended to divide or not, for so flagrant a case as this had never occurred, and therefore no previous case could be referred to as a precedent for their guidance.

SIR R. PEEL: Sir, I have heard with great satisfaction the noble Lord declare that it was the intention of Her Majesty's Government to avow their public approbation of the conduct of Sir Henry Bulwer, and to adopt the responsibility for themselves of that conduct. I can assure the noble Lord, however, that in the speech he delivered he did qualify the approbation of Sir H. Bulwer's conduct, by stating, as he is represented to have said by the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire, that the Government would assume the greater part of the responsibility for the conduct of Sir Henry Bulwer. The noble Lord's subsequent exclamation led me to think that he would adopt the more manly and more just course in this case, of adopting for the Government the whole of the responsibility, and identify themselves with Sir Henry Bulwer. Sir, I think it but just that they should do so. I think it the more incumbent on the Government now to adopt that responsibility, and to give it their sanction, because it appears recorded in these papers which have been laid before Parliament, that one of the causes assigned by the Spanish Government for removing Sir Henry Bulwer was this, that public opinion was adverse to him in Spain. [Several Hon. MEMBERS: In England.] In Spain. The public mind in Spain was excited, and the papers say, "How can we reconcile Spaniards to your maintenance as Minister here, when, in your own country, the Government gives you up?" Sir Henry Bulwer was placed in Spain not by the noble Lord, but by my noble Friend Lord Aberdeen, who preceded him. He was placed there not from any political connection, but he was placed there because my noble Friend thought that his past conduct in the profession which he had chosen entitled him to the favour and confidence of a Government from which he differed in political sentiments. Sir, my noble Friend thought—and thought most justly—that the diplomatic profession was not a profession which should be made subservient to the mere promotion of party feeling. My noble Friend thought that the diplomatic profession partook in some degree of the character of the naval or military profession, and that it would be unjust if a man, having entered into that profession, although politically connected with another party, yet proving himself worthy of the confidence of any party, was to be deprived of that fair advancement to which his abilities entitled him, merely because he differed in political opinion from the party in power. Sir, my noble Friend, I believe, was blamed in some quarters for the profession of those sentiments, and for acting upon them; but I am sure that the true way to encourage diplomatic exertions is to show that no such difference of opinion disentitles a man to the confidence of those who employ him; and to prove to those engaged in the diplomatic profession that if they serve their country faithfully and honestly, they will not lose the prospect of reward because they entertain different political sentiments from the party which happens to be in power. Sir, it was in pursuance of those opinions that my noble Friend, having no personal acquaintance or party connexion with Sir Henry Bulwer, advised Her Majesty to place him in the responsible and difficult position of Minister at Madrid; and I must say that during the period that he acted in communication with us, his conduct fully justified the confidence we reposed in him. My experience of the manner in which Sir Henry Bulwer fulfilled his instructions, led us to expect that he would not be found deficient; and as he acted faithfully and honourably with us, strictly pursuing the instructions which he received, so in this case his conduct would be in conformity with the wishes and intentions of those by whom he was instructed. So much for the general opinion I entertain of his conduct. But looking at these despatches, I see no grounds for imputing any blame to Sir H. Bulwer. He was told to seek an opportunity of communicating with the Queen Mother. The instructions of the noble Lord the Foreign Secretary to Sir H. Bulwer appear plain. Sir H. Bulwer understood them in that sense; and no man reading the letter of the noble Lord could construe its meaning otherwise than as instructing Sir H. Bulwer to make a certain communication with the Spanish Government on a certain subject, if an opportunity were afforded him to do so. That Sir H. Bulwer placed such a construction on them appears from his letter, where he answers, "I have taken an opportunity of communicating with the Queen Mother," &c. Now, I think, whatever might have been the intentions of the noble Lord, Sir H. Bulwer was justified, under the circumstances in which he was placed, to communicate the letter which he did communicate, *in extenso*, to the Spanish Government. Let us consider that he was watching thrones tumbling around him in Europe, when he believed there was danger to the Spanish monarchy—for there had already been an insurrection at Madrid—he felt it necessary to give a warning to the Government, and, distrusting his own personal influence, unless he satisfied the Spanish Government that he was armed with higher authority than his own fears, he communicated the opinions entertained by the English Government; and if that Government then throws any portion of the blame, if blame there be, on Sir H. Bulwer, it would be setting a bad example for the future, and one which would warn any servant of the British Crown from incurring any of the responsibility which might accrue to a difficult position. Therefore I heard with satisfaction that the acts of Sir Henry Bulwer were adopted and defended by the noble Lord. But, Sir, the immediate matter for us to decide is, how shall we dispose of the Motion which has been made by the hon. Member for Dorsetshire? Now, the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli) says that we have three duties on this occasion to perform: first, we have to manifest a determination to exempt Sir Henry Bulwer from blame; secondly, we are to manifest a determination to support the British Government in maintaining the honour of England, outraged by the act of Spain; and, thirdly, that we are not to condemn the noble Lord, but we are to condemn that system by which liberalism has influenced our diplomatic proceedings in foreign countries. Now, I confess I do not see how we can fulfil any one of those duties by voting for the resolution before the House. First of all, I see no recognition whatever of the good conduct of Sir Henry Bulwer; but I see a resolution which, if adopted by this House, must, I think, imply that Sir Henry Bulwer has acted improperly. When we are called upon to affirm this resolution, there is no difference between Sir Henry Bulwer and the Government. The resolution is—

> "That this House learns with deep regret, from a correspondence between the British Government and the Government of Spain, now upon the table of this House, that a proposed interference with the internal concerns of the Spanish Government, as conducted under the authority and with the entire approval of Her Majesty's Ministers, has placed the British Government, and our representative at the Court of Madrid, in a position humiliating in its character, and which is calculated to affect the friendly relations heretofore existing between the Courts of Great Britain and of Spain."

Well, if we really wish to exempt Sir Henry Bulwer from any share of the responsibility—and I think he is fairly entitled to it—surely, we ought if we vote any resolution, distinctly to imply that we do not disapprove of the conduct of Sir Henry Bulwer. The nature of our duty is to manifest, on the part of the House of Commons, a desire to support the Crown in vindicating the insulted honour of the nation. If that be our duty, and we are prepared to fulfil it, we ought to give to the Throne the expression of our opinion in some less equivocal terms than this. It should have been—that we regret that Spain has committed an outrage upon this country by the abrupt dismissal of our Minister; and we give our assurance to the Crown that the House of Commons will support the Crown in the vindication of the honour of the country. But instead of that, if we vote that a proposed interference with the internal concerns of the Spanish Government has placed the British Government in a position humiliating to its character, so far from aiding the Government in vindicating the honour of England, I think you would send the British Government who have conducted these negotiations—you would send them away with disgrace tied round their necks by a vote of the House of Commons; and, so far from enabling them to vindicate the insulted honour of the country, you would incapacitate them from taking that position and assuming that high tone in the discussion which you wish them to exhibit. The Spanish Government, in reply, would say, "We cannot defend Sir Henry Bulwer, if you cannot defend him"—as, depend upon it, they will say it—"We can pay no attention to your representations, for the House of Commons have told you that you have placed the Government in a humiliating position. If you had approached us armed with the express concurrence of the House of Commons, then we might probably have thought that you were in earnest when you advert to your power; but after your censure by the House of Commons, and your consenting to remain in office after the infliction of that censure, it is utterly impossible for us to attach any weight to the representations you may make." I think, Sir, that second duty to which the hon. Gentleman adverted would be ineffectually discharged by assenting to this resolution. Then remember the third duty is condemning the system under which the noble Lord has acted. I know not what the noble Lord's feelings would be after this vote had been assented to; but as this vote distinctly recognises that the proposed interference has placed the Government in a humiliating position, I am very much afraid the noble Lord will not be able to maintain his post, notwithstanding the construction placed by the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli) on the tenor of the resolution, namely, that we may condemn the system and not involve in punishment any individual; therefore it does appear to me that no one of these three objects specially recommended by the hon. Gentleman will be accomplished by voting for this resolution. Now, Sir, although I cannot concur in this resolution, yet I would not have my refusal to agree to it imply approbation of the noble Lord in the course he has taken. I think the noble Lord was fully entitled to give warning and advice to the Spanish Government. I don't object to the thing, I do object to the manner in which it was done. I do not think, after all our relations with Spain, seeing the position in which Europe is placed—seeing the tremendous events that have been and are still of daily occurrence—I do not think it was an illegitimate, I do not think it was an unfriendly, act for the noble Lord to say to Spain and the Spanish Government, "Beware, be cautious, watch the events that are passing, place no reliance upon arms, however numerous or however disciplined—consult the general good will of your people." Therefore I do not find fault with the noble Lord. But, adverting to the fair description of the Spanish people and our relations with them, as given by the noble Lord—remembering that they are a people inferior to us—remembering that they are a people under deep obligations to this country, not only for advice tendered but for exertions made—for vast sums expended—for noble blood shed in defence and vindication of their liberties—remembering, above all, that they are a gallant nation, peculiarly jealous of independence—sensitive upon the point of honour; it is because I believe the noble Lord has correctly described our relations, has formed a just estimate of the Spanish character, has justly dwelt upon its pride, its gallantry, its sensitiveness, its jealousy if you will—that I do think, if the noble Lord wished to make an impression upon the mind of that people, it would have been wiser to have held different language, and have proffered advice in a different manner from that adopted by the noble Lord. Of course the object of the noble Lord was that the friendly advice tendered by him should be adopted, and followed in a cordial spirit. I think there is an abruptness in the original letter to Sir H. Bulwer. There are expressions assuming a tone of superiority which are I think calculated to offend that gallant nation. There is the *recordatio* of past services, which looks like *ex probatio.* Then with respect to the second letter of the noble Lord. Seeing that at that time the noble Lord could read in any newspaper accounts of three or four revolutions at a time, I am not surprised that he wrote hastily. Those letters were transmitted to Sir H. Bulwer, and he thought it his duty to communicate them to the Spanish Government. I do not find so much fault with the first letter as I really do with the second. I do think that such reminiscences of the great obligations which Spain owes to this country were calculated to give pain. I think the concluding part of that sentence, in which the noble Lord said that but for British assistance the Spanish Ministers whom he was now addressing might have been exiles in a foreign land—I must say that I think that personal appeal to the Spanish Ministers was not calculated to win their confidence, or conciliate the adoption of the advice tendered to them. Now, the noble Lord the Prime Minister vindicates the noble Lord by reciting a story which he had from Lord Holland, which did not appear to be very germane to the matter. The noble Lord says that Lord Holland told him that Lord Archibald Hamilton was dining at Holland-house, and he was shown into a room where there was another gentleman, with whom he was not acquainted—that that gentleman held to him very offensive language—and that Lord Archibald Hamilton, when Lord Holland entered the room, said, "This person, who is a total stranger to me, has used offensive language to me—so offensive, indeed, that the alternative I have is either to laugh at him or knock him down." Well, it was very well to do one or other of these things; but the noble Lord has done both. He first laughs at the gentleman who offered the offence, and then knocks him down. Now, suppose Lord Archibald Hamilton had taken that course—suppose that being offended, he had first of all laughed, and supposing after having laughed he had addressed him in the longest sentence that was ever written in the English language. Supposing before Lord Holland had entered, Lord Archibald Hamilton, being grossly offended, and being determined to adopt the milder alternative named, received the offence with indifference, and even smiled at it. Then supposing he had gone on to make a speech to this gentleman longer than some sermons, and had ended by saying to him, "If it had not been for me, you would have been a beggar in the streets," why Lord Holland could not have admired Lord Archibald Hamilton for having wisely chosen the milder of the two alternatives; and Lord Archibald Hamilton would have forfeited that character for discretion which Lord Holland appears willing to have assigned him. I look at the sentence of the noble Lord, in which he declares that he is not in the slightest degree offended, and then he proceeds to administer twenty-nine consecutive lines of rebuke, in so impassioned a strain as not to stop to take breath during the whole of that sentence. Now, I think the noble Lord—begging his pardon—is more like Sir Fretful Plagiary than Lord Archibald Hamilton, because he says, "I am not in the least degee offended;" and then at once, by way of showing his perfect indifference, he proceeds to abuse his unfortunate opponent without mercy, as I said before, in twenty-nine lines of consecutive rebuke. He goes into a painful remonstrance with these dukes and distinguished generals, and says, "If it had not been for me and my liberal policy, at this moment you would have been exiles in a foreign land." Now, that was most ungracious, and it is with that part of the transaction that I am most dissatisfied. But, at the same time, I apprehend it is very difficult to conduct diplomatic transactions of this kind without making errors, and even grave ones. The error on this occasion, in my opinion, was not an error of fact—the error was in the way in which the noble Lord exercised his authority, which I think he was entitled to exercise. I regret the manner, because the noble Lord, by assuming that tone, defied instead of conciliating the Spanish Government, and thereby establishing legitimate British influence, and making the Spanish Government feel that amidst all the storms and convulsions that were then raging, we were animated by a sincere desire for the welfare of Spain: instead of that the noble Lord has alienated at least a part of the Spanish nation—the Spanish Government—merely by the mode in which he gave the advice that he tendered. On that account I deeply regret it. I do not think the terms happily chosen; I know no proposed interference with the Spanish Government excepting by the proffer of advice; and that interference the Spanish Government have rejected. In the very second letter presented, it appears that the Duke of Sotomayor invited Sir H. Bulwer to have an interview with him; that Sir H. Bulwer gave him advice—that he took it very friendly and cordially when it was tendered in a friendly spirit; and even General Narvaez admitted the justice of the observations made by Sir H. Bulwer, and was ready to conform to them so far as he could; nay, he went much further than I could have supposed it possible for General Narvaez to do; so far, that when he was approached in a proper manner, and Sir H. Bulwer gave this advice, he declared that he was ready to abandon office, and let his enemies come in—to let the Progressistas come in—with a provision that they would adopt Moderado views. I think, then, that Sir H. Bulwer had the opportunity of offering advice to the Spanish Government when tendered in a friendly spirit, in the manner which true wisdom and policy would dictate. Thus no objection to the proposed interference, so far as advice was concerned, can be recognised in this resolution; the objection is to the manner in which it was offered, and not to the interference itself. Sir, I object to this resolution, because I think it is not consistent with justice. I do not think that an error on the part of a Minister of the Crown ought to be visited with so heavy a censure as such a resolution of the House of Commons. I object to the resolution because I think it is calculated to weaken the authority of the Government, and to make us appear as if we were partisans of the Spanish Government, and because I think it would prejudice the chance of securing an amicable and satisfactory settlement, by showing that there was a material difference of opinion between the Ministers of the Crown and us. I cannot sanction a resolution which records that my country is in a humiliated state. I think the Motion premature, and that it would be much better, if the House of Commons is to express any opinion at all in this matter, to wait until the whole transaction is before us, than to take a single scene of a single act of a complicated and unperformed drama. I think it would be better, instead of taking one scene of one act, that we should wait until the piece is complete, and see what is the *dénouement.* I think, if the tone and manner of the despatches of the noble Lord be not perfectly justifiable, that the penalty proposed by this resolution is far too severe, for that penalty is the censure of the House of Commons. I think it would be unwise on the part of the House of Commons to record a resolution that this country is in a humiliated condition. I believe that such a record would, moreover, paralyse the exertions of our Government by leading that of Spain to entertain false expectations and false notions; and believing that the public interests of this country would be affected by affirming this resolution, instead of staying away from the House, as I might have done, I shall give a vote which will not imply an entire approbation of the terms and manner employed by the noble Lord in this correspondence; I shall vote for the House passing to a Committee of Supply, instead of affirming this resolution.

Viscount PALMERSTON: Sir, I certainly concur in opinion with the right hon. Baronet, that if the hon. and learned Member thought it expedient to make this Motion, it is not therefore one which it is expedient for the House to agree to. The hon. and learned Gentleman, expressing a desire to vindicate the honour of this country, if it requires vindication, began by proposing to the House to affirm a resolution that this country is in a state of humiliation. That is certainly not a mode in which, in my opinion, his object can be accomplished. If the hon. and learned Gentleman finds fault with the first part of the transaction—namely, with the despatch which I wrote to Sir H. Bulwer, and which was sent by him to the Duke de Sotomayor, to that his Motion ought to have been directed, and upon that ground I should have been prepared, as I am, to meet him. First of all, I shall answer the question which he put to me as to who was to be reponsible for the approval given in two despatches of mine to Sir H. Bulwer. Sir, I have no hesitation in saying that I, and I alone, am responsible for an act of that kind, for a signification of approval conveyed to an officer of the department over which I preside; and if the House shall be of opinion that the approbation was improperly conveyed, and that instead of approving of the conduct of Sir H. Bulwer, it ought to have been censured, it is upon me, and me alone, that the censure of the House ought to fall. Sir, I think no censure is due for that approval, because, in my opinion, Sir H. Bulwer acted according to the best of his judgment, exercising a proper discretion; and I think I was borne out in conveying to him the approbation which those despatches communicated. Having said that, I must at the same time observe, in order to state the matter as it really passed to the House, that that despatch of mine, dated March 16, was not sent for the purpose of being communicated in writing to the Spanish Government. I think any man who reads that despatch will see that it was not so intended; there was no such intention. First of all, the form, as has been very justly remarked by those who have spoken upon the subject, if it had been the draft of a note to be sent in to the Spanish Government, would have more amply developed the views stated in it; there would have been a longer introduction; it would have been written, in short, in a different manner from that in which it was composed, laconic as the sentences appear to the hon. Gentleman opposite. It was a text upon which Sir H. Bulwer was to speak; but it was not intended, when written, to be presented just in the shape in which it was given in. Sir, it is hardly necessary for me, I think, especially after what has fallen from the right hon. Baronet opposite, to justify myself in having written that despatch, instructing Sir H. Bulwer to give advice upon those matters to the Government of Spain. Those Gentlemen who have looked at the papers will see that some days before I wrote that despatch I had received information from Sir H. Bulwer that the Spanish Government was meditating a course which, in his opinion, was likely to produce great opposition in Parliament, if Parliament continued to sit; that that opposition was likely to induce the Government to prorogue or get rid of Parliament; and if that course were to be pursued, there would be the greatest danger of insurrection in different parts of the country, and more especially the Carlist party would be likely to show itself in force in those parts of Spain which were the head-quarters of that party. Well, Sir, the general knowledge of the state of Europe, the multitude of disastrous events which came to our knowledge from day to day, and this representation of what was the course likely to be pursued by the Spanish Government, and its probable consequences, I think were a full justification for my instructing Sir H. Bulwer to bring under the consideration of the Government of Spain those considerations which pointed out on the one hand their danger, and on the other showed the means by which that danger might be obviated. I had no reason to think that such a course would give offence to the Spanish Government, because it will be seen that upon an occasion very shortly previous, the Duke of Sotomayor, having had a conversation with Sir H. Bulwer upon those matters, of his own accord turned the conversation afterwards to the unfortunate condition of Spain, spoke to Sir H. Bulwer of what the intentions of the Spanish Government were; and when Sir H. Bulwer said to him, "As what you have said invites me to give an opinion, I give it;" he received in a very frank and amicable spirit the opinions tendered, and the reasons for those opinions. I have been asked something about the asterisks in that despatch, which seem to have excited all that curiosity which always attaches to things unknown; and it is supposed that the omitted passage indicated by the asterisks, contained some grave and important matter bearing very closely upon the points we are now discussing. I have here the despatch from which that extract is given. I can read to the House the omitted passage; but the House will probably not ask me to do so when I mention the nature of the passage, which is simply that the Duke of Sotomayor stated to Sir H. Bulwer what were the views and intentions of the Spanish Government in regard to its relations with a third Power. It had nothing to do with the relations of England and Spain, but with the relations of Spain and another country; and I thought it would be unfair to the Government of Spain, to lay it on the table and publish it, because I could not tell how far the language held by the Duke of Sotomayor to Sir H. Bulwer might tally or not with the language held by the Spanish Government in its direct communications. I say, then, seeing that both the Duke of Sotomayor and the Duke of Valentia permitted Sir H. Bulwer to talk freely to them as to the internal affairs of Spain, I had no reason to think that the instruction which I was giving to Sir H. Bulwer was calculated to produce any irritation or acrimony of feeling. In point of fact, the instruction of March 16th only desires him to state that which it appears he had been stating at the very time upon his own discretion and judgment, anticipating thereby the instructions he afterwards received. Well, then, the question is—was Sir H. Bulwer, having received a despatch which obviously meant only personal and verbal communications, justified or not in putting that despatch to a different purpose, and in communicating it in writing to the Government of Spain? Now, I think he was. I think the reasons which he gives for having pursued that course were perfectly sufficient to justify the discretion which he exercised by so doing. He had exhausted all the means of representation which personal and verbal communications afforded him; he had represented the arguments and the facts with which he was entrusted to the Duke of Sotomayor and the Duke of Valentia; he had found his representations unavailing; he desired very naturally to give to his representations that greater weight which they would derive from its being manifest that they came not from him only but from his Government; and there was another motive, that by giving these representations in writing, they were likely to come to the knowledge of persons to whose knowledge he was not sure that they would come if they did not go beyond conversation. I therefore was of opinion, and am so still, that Sir H. Bulwer was perfectly borne out in the course which he pursued; and thinking that, I gave the approbation which was due from me as the person responsible to Parliament. If I had even doubted as to the discretion which he had exercised—and I have no doubt—I think that when the despatch and letter were rejected in the manner in which they were rejected, it would have been a shabby abandonment of a public officer, if I had not armed him as against the Government from which this rejection had proceeded with a full and entire approbation of his conduct in the transactions in which it was implicated. Sir, I must say, that that letter also was not calculated to produce the irritation which it seems to have excited, because it did not make the representation in that formal manner in which those acquainted with diplomatic transactions know that official communications are framed. He did not say, "the undersigned is instructed to state;" he qualifies the despatch communicated, as remarks recently transmitted to him by the Secretary of State on the aspect of Spanish affairs. With respect to our right to give friendly advice to the Spanish Government, I do not put it simply upon the ground of obligations we have conferred, or of our being entitled to appeal to the gratitude of the Spanish nation or the Spanish Government for services rendered by England to Spain, though I think upon that ground we may establish a claim to say much to Spain, if we can prove that our advice is tendered in a friendly spirit, and with no object in view but the interests of Spain herself. But I put it upon ground, I think, even stronger and more indisputable than that of gratitude—upon the ground of the view uniformly taken by Spain, that we were bound to give her assistance in cases which may arise to require it. My right hon. Friend the Master of the Mint has reminded the House of the transactions out of which the Quadruple Treaty arose; that treaty was not an engagement volunteered by this country; it was an engagement originally sought by the Spanish agents sent to this country for the express purpose of inducing the English Government to step forward and assist them in the difficult position in which Spain then stood. It is said, we gave that assistance because we thought the Queen of Spain had the better right of the two claimants. Why, that was only part of the reason for the decision which the English Government took. If we had not thought that the Queen of Spain had the better right, we certainly should not have given the support which was asked; but we should not have given that support merely because we thought she was the best claimant. It was because we felt that the cause with which she was identified was the cause of the liberties and independence of the Spanish nation; it was because we believed the judgments of the Spanish nation were enlisted on her side, and that the banner for which they fought was not merely the banner of Isabella, but the banner of the constitution; it was upon this ground we were led to conclude that in giving the assistance and support which was asked, we should be borne out by the public opinion and approbation of this country. When the first act of that transaction was completed—when Don Miguel and Don Carlos were expelled from Portugal, and Don Carlos afterwards repaired to Spain—we were asked to conclude additional articles which referred to Spain; and the very ground on which those additional articles were sought, as stated by Senor Martinez de la Rosa, were these:—He dwelt on the manifold evils to be apprehended from the return of the Pretender to Portugal; and he said the question was, not with respect to the succession to the thrones of Spain and Portugal, but the question was between the agitating principles which disturbed Europe, which would yet disturb the Peninsula, and embarrass the Governments both of England and of France. It was on that ground the support of this country was asked for by Spain; and it was on that ground that, believing as we did the claims of Queen Isabella were founded on justice, and were identified with the principles on which Martinez de la Rosa appealed, and that we should be borne out by the people of this country—we consented to take the steps we did take. If that be so, in what position would this country be placed if we were called on to act under the letter of our engagements, when such was the spirit in which they were formed; if this country were called upon not to assist the Spanish nation to support the constitution, but to enable the Government to overturn that constitution and to establish in Spain that very despotism against which the treaty was originally framed? It is said, it is a boastful assertion to make that the Queen of Spain owed her throne in a great degree to the support which this country has given her. That may be a boastful assertion, but it is an assertion founded on fact. It is an assertion which has more than once been made a matter of reproach to me by hon. Gentlemen who are supporters of the claims of the contending Prince. But what is the state of the case? It is, that on the one hand the great bulk of the Spanish nation were contending for Queen Isabella and the constitution, but on the other hand there was a smaller party supported by foreign influence, and whose expenses, as since ascertained, were assisted by very large contributions of money from other countries. It was a contest between one party in Spain and another, the latter a smaller party, but supported by foreign influence and money; and therefore it was not only civil war that raged, it was, in fact, a warfare of a much larger description. It was not only a question which affected Spain; it was an European question. We have been told that Lord Grey proclaimed it as his principle that the march of his administration should proceed on the basis of non-intervention and peace abroad, as of reform and retrenchment at home. It is perfectly true that non-interference was mentioned also; but that mention of non-interference alluded to what was then going on in Belgium, where—there being a revolt at the time—there was an apprehension that England and the other Powers united by treaties were going to interfere, not by moral influence or persuasion, but by the force of arms, in order to coerce the people of Belgium, and compel them to return to the authority of the Netherlands Government. It was with respect to that interference by force of arms the disclaimer towards the hon. Gentleman alluded to was made; and so far from the Government of Lord Grey having been founded on the principle of non-interference, one of the very first courses of action pursued by that Government was to call for the joint interference of the Five Powers in the arrangements between Belgium and Holland. I say, then, Sir, that so far we were entitled by the nature of our engagements to say, under the provisions of the Quadruple Treaty, which rendered us liable to be called upon to act under that treaty, what we did say, and to warn the Spanish Government against pursuing the course under which that appeal and demand for assistance might be made to us. I contend that in writing the despatch of the 16th of March, I did no more than in point of principle Her Majesty's Government was entitled to do; and although the right hon. Baronet who spoke last thought there was matter in the wording of the despatch which was not such as was calculated to conciliate or to persuade, my answer to his remark is, that the despatch in question was not written for the purpose of threatening, and that the right hon. Gentleman, thinking, as it would appear, that there was some allusion in that despatch to benefits conferred, will find, on looking to it again and reading it more closely, that there was no allusion about benefits at all, and that it contained nothing but advice. The allusion to the past benefits of England to Spain was in the subsequent despatch, which was written in answer to the reply to the first despatch. The right hon. Gentleman says, I "laughed at the Spanish Minister, and knocked him down." This is his opinion. There are, on the other hand, some hon. Gentlemen who think that I evinced a want of proper spirit on the occasion, and that I should have shown myself more offended by the conduct of the Spanish Government. Again, there are other Gentlemen who think that I was too much offended, and that I exhibited in my communication too great an indication of a sense of offence.

Between these contending opinions, which I leave to those who entertain them to discuss between themselves, I think I may state that this was not a case in which the British Government believed themselves offended; and that even if they were, any one who reads the despatch of the Duke of Sotomayor, in which the despatch of the British Government is returned to Sir Henry Bulwer, will, I think, see that no one can possibly contemplate it with any feeling to which the terms anger or indignation can be applied; but that he will look upon it with feelings of a very different nature. At all events, the complaint was made that we showed too much forbearance to the Spanish Government, and that having grounds for taking offence with them, we abstained from availing ourselves of that ground. Sir, I confess, if I am accused of an error of judgment in a matter of such importance as that which relates to the continuance of amicable intercourse between the States, I should rather be blamed for being too tardy in taking offence, than for being too prone and prompt to pick a quarrel on such grounds with a foreign nation. With respect to the other stage of this affair, I have stated to the House that communications are going on with the Minister of Spain on the part of Her Majesty's Government, on the subject of the reasons which have been assigned for sending Sir H. Bulwer his passport. When these communications are concluded, and when Her Majesty's Government shall have been able to come to a decision on the question, I shall be prepared to communicate to Parliament the correspondence which has passed on the occasion; but I am sure the House will see that while these communications—for I will not, under the circumstances, call them negotiations—are going on, it would be highly improper for me either to state the precise nature of what has passed, or to tell the House I am prepared to lay the papers on the table. But so far I may state, that though, for reasons which I believe to be valid, I have declined to have any direct communication with Count de Mirasol, who comes to this Court, so far as I am aware, without any diplomatic character, and whose statements have no official value or authenticity, I have nevertheless expressed to M. Isturitz, the Minister of the Queen of Spain at this Court, the fact that Her Majesty's Government are prepared to take from him any statement of any kind with reference to this affair, without the Count de Mirasol having been sent to this country at all. I will further say, that in a country which, like Spain, has been subject to several multiplied changes, it is difficult for the Minister who represents a foreign Court not to hold communication with all parties; and that where there is a country like Spain, in which, between 1832 and 1847, there have been thirty Presidents of the Council, and thirty-eight Ministers of Foreign Affairs, it must, I think, be difficult indeed for any one who has to treat with these various and successive Ministries to confine his communications of political and social intercourse to that particular Gentleman who for six months shall happen to be in office; and that it is not surprising if he should keep up his habits of intercourse with the other thirty-seven Foreign Ministers, besides the one who happens to be in office, or that the twenty-nine ex-Presidents should still be in habits of social intercourse with that Foreign Minister. I really feel, after the manner in which this question has been discussed—after the arguments used on one side and the other—and after the small degree of difference of opinion which has prevailed on material points—that I shall do best if I shall leave the case in the hands of the House. I think there can be but little doubt, after what has passed on this occasion, how they will dispose of the present Motion. But I again say, that if there be any degree of responsibility with respect to the approval which I have expressed of Sir Henry Bulwer's conduct, I am ready to take that degree which it is my duty to take upon myself. I must say that I think this approbation has been properly bestowed on him. Of the various Gentlemen who have spoken, all have concurred in saying that no blame attached to Sir H. Bulwer for his conduct. If that be the opinion of the House, I trust I stand excused for my approval of it; but if they should not come to that conclusion, then on me must rest the censure of the House, and on me must rest the responsibility.

MR. HUME could not understand how the Motion could be persevered in after the speech they had just heard from the noble Lord. Having been mixed up in that question in various ways, he (Mr. Hume) could not but state, that, having pressed for the documents which had been laid before the House, he approved most entirely of the conduct of Sir H. Bulwer, and that he also approved of the conduct of the noble Lord; except that if he had been in the noble Lord's place, he would have directed Sir H. Bulwer to have at once asked for his passports and to leave Madrid. The ingratitude of the Spanish Government ought to show the noble Lord, and all who meddled in foreign affairs, what they had to expect from foreign Governments. No country had ever received such favours from another as had Spain from England; but what benefits had those favours created either to the people of Spain or to the people of England? All the result had been a vast expenditure of money, much interference, and a great deal of ill-will between the two countries. He could assure the hon. Gentleman who alluded to him in the course of the debate, that if there were any points in public matters to which he would direct his attention more than to others, they were reform, economy, and non-intervention.

MR. URQUHART: In this discussion all that is of importance has been omitted. It is the meddling of England in the affairs of Spain which has been the source of the calamities of that country. If you would give me the time, I would prove it to you by the authority of the first of French statesmen, M. Guizot and M. Thiers. Since you will not give me that time, you must take upon trust what I assert to be their conclusion that the rivalries of England and France in Spain have been the cause of the troubles which have visited that country. Sir Henry Bulwer has only acted in conformity with this system, and in obedience to the instructions which he had received, and which have been ably directed to that same end. If you want additional proof to that which is afforded by the papers recently laid upon the table of the House, read the despatch of the 19th July, 1836, in which the noble Lord originated the quarrel between France and England on the subject of Spain, and there you will see that the representative of England was ordered, in a secret and covert manner, to foment the discontent and ill will which, by his instructions in 1848, he was openly to manifest. It is here no question of principles and doctrines, but one of act and purpose. [Mr. URQUHART here said he would move the adjournment of the debate, and silence being for some time restored, he resumed.] I told you upon a former occasion I should trust to events to justify my words and my warnings against your opinions and your indifference. Here we have one of those results—not one which merely in a general manner confirms what I have asserted—but one of those which accomplishes a special prediction. All the reasonings in the world, and all the panegyrics, cannot destroy the fact; and what is the fact that you have before you? A rupture with Spain—a rupture which has no cause save that universal cause—the presence of the noble Lord in the Foreign Office. England has endured an unparaleled insult; and French influence, which was put forward by the noble Lord as a pretext for his interference, having been by events excluded from the Peninsula, he has managed to restore it all. I announced, when the noble Lord was restored to office, in June, 1846, that before six months we should have a quarrel with France. One month had not elapsed, and that prediction was realised. When the fall of Louis Philippe put an end to French influence in the Peninsula, I predicted that the noble Lord would restore it. These were the words which I used in this House on the 16th of May last:—

> "The noble Lord has laboured, and with success, to upset one dynasty in France; that is what I predicted—that is what he has accomplished. The gulf into which he has dragged that dynasty was Spain; and no sooner had it fallen, than his joy broke forth, not in this House, but in his organ, and he exclaimed, '*Pyreneas transit!*' Having destroyed one system in France, would he spare the next? No. The Spanish correspondence, which has just appeared, shows that he is at his work again, and by the same means. He irritates France by new intrigues at Madrid, and opens to her a new door of influence by the animosity which he has excited in Spain against the English name."

These were the words which I uttered in this House on the 16th of May. Are they not confirmed? In what position is the Duke de Montpensier now in Spain—and to whom does he owe that position, save from the treatment at the hands of the noble Lord in England, and by the noble Lord's acts in Spain? And what means were so appropriate to excite again France into foreign and diplomatic intrigues, as to raise to importance in Spain the fallen dynasty? I will support the Motion of the hon. Member for Dorsetshire, not in a spirit hostile to the Ministry, but in order to assist, if possible, in relieving the Ministry and the country from the presence of the noble Lord at the head of the Foreign department—to relieve that Ministry from the control of an individual Member, in whose confidence they are not. I must impress upon the attention of the House that the resolution of the hon. Member for Dorsetshire had reference not to the expulsion of Sir Henry Bulwer, but to the return to the insulting advice transmitted by the noble Lord, with which the latter could have nothing to do; but it is to be observed that that resolution, while conveying a censure upon what had already happened, was a prediction as to what would follow. It was therein asserted that what had occurred was calculated to interrupt the friendly relations between Spain and England. This consequence has followed, and it will not stop here. Determinately, deliberately, has the design been conceived and executed: the object is a rupture with Spain, not for anything connected with Spain, but for the effects which it is to have elsewhere. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dungarvon, in defending the noble Lord, has spoken of the violence with which he had often seen him attacked, and the splendour on such occasions of his defence. Does that right hon. Gentleman refer to his own eloquence? Never was it exerted with more vigour than in attacking the noble Lord; but he has not put us in possession of the satisfaction which he had ever received. Here is a dispute with an old ally, produced without cause, and when every circumstance was favourable to the most harmonious intercourse, at a moment when that historic influence of France had disappeared, and when Moderado not less than Progressista had turned round to England, seeking confident alliance and support—at the very moment when it was requisite to have supported the Throne, and rescued the Peninsula from the disorders of the rest of Europe, is this inconceivable, this incredible dispute created, bringing results so evident, that they must have entered into the calculation. And who is Minister, when this occurs? Why, a man who has gained the reputation through all Europe of a firebrand—one of whom Talleyrand had said that he would end by laying Europe in blood and ashes—and of whom his own ally, M. Thiers, has used these remarkable words, that he was "detested by the Cabinets of the Continent"—against whom the last of our British statesmen warns on his death-bed his successors. Is not this, then, the occasion for you to separate the conduct of the Minister from all questions of principle and of policy, and to examine and judge him in himself, I declare to you that the projects of that Minister are dangerous to England, to Europe, and the human race. Already has he laboriously effected the destruction of respect for the British name, and deeply and universally compromised the interests of the country. He pursues that course, confident in the impunity which he finds in the indifference of this House. I declare to you, that so long as that Minister remains in office, peace in Europe will be without security, and honest concord between England and any foreign Power impossible.

Question, that the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question, put and agreed to.

House in Committee of Supply, *pro formâ*, and resumed.

House adjourned at a quarter past One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, June 6, 1848.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—1ª Criminal Law Consolidation (No. 2).

2ª Petty Bag Office.

Reported.—Collectors of Cess (Ireland); Tobago Relief and Immigration into British Guiana and Trinidad.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Leith, against any Alteration in the Navigation Laws.—From the Ardee Board of Guardians, County Louth, for Alteration of the Irish Poor Law.—From the Presbytery of Templepatrick, for Facilitating the Attainment of Sites for Scotch Churches.—From the Parish of Ashfield, complaining of the Inefficient Support granted to certain Schools in Ireland, and for Relief.—From Glasgow and Perth, against the Diplomatic Relations, Court of Rome, Bill.—From Buckingham and Halstead, for the Adoption of Measures for the Suppression of Seduction and Prostitution.—From Newtownards, for the Imposition of the Severest Penalties on all Roman Catholic Priests who shall Denounce Persons from the Altar.

TOBAGO RELIEF, &c., BILL.

EARL GREY, in moving the Order of the Day for going into Committee on the Tobago Relief and Immigration into British Guiana and Trinidad Bill, said, that in 1844, in consequence of earnest applications which were addressed to the Government, the noble Lord (Lord Stanley), who then held the office of Colonial Secretary, gave his sanction to the raising of loans for aiding the immigration of free labourers into our West Indian colonies; and, on the understanding that the repayment of those loans would be provided for by the colonies, measures were taken to introduce a number of free labourers into the West India islands. No guarantee was given for the repayment of the loans, which were raised merely on the credit of the colonies.

During the first three years a portion of the loans was punctually repaid; but in the autumn of last year, in consequence of the commercial distress which existed in the colonies, occasioned by various circumstances, it was found impossible to provide means for meeting the charge; and the object of this Bill was to afford assistance to the amount of 170,000*l.* to the colonies in meeting the expenditure which had already been incurred, and not to carry out any further measures of a similar nature. He had the opinion of his two immediate predecessors in the Colonial Office to fortify him in stating his conviction that the introduction of Coolies into the colonies was far too expensive to answer the object in view, and that the only profitable source of free labour must be Africa. The noble Lord concluded by moving that their Lordships should go into Committee on the Bill.

Lord BROUGHAM observed, that as this was a Money Bill their Lordships must either adopt it altogether, or reject it altogether; they had no power to make any alteration in it. He would be most unwilling to defeat any measure which was intended to benefit our West India colonies; for there was no portion of the empire which had a stronger claim on the consideration of the British Parliament than those colonies. They had been the victims not merely of earthquakes and of hurricanes, but of worse evils—he meant the ever-varying policy of the mother country. In order to furnish a nursery for our seamen, we required the colonies to submit to the African slave trade, against which infliction some of them protested. Then came the philanthropic efforts of this country, of which the colonies were made the first victims. Next followed the emancipation of the negroes—a measure of the highest justice, humanity, and soundest policy; but he was bound in fairness to the colonies, to the negroes, and to the cause of truth and justice itself, to admit that that measure was not, perhaps, carried into effect with all the due deliberate consideration which ought to have accompanied it, and the want of which had given rise to, he would not say its failure, but its imperfect success. Consequently, the unhappy colonies were again sufferers. Last of all came the reign of free trade; and again he must admit, though himself a free-trader, that the colonies suffered from our somewhat pedantic and excessive extension of the principles of free trade, without any consideration of the circumstances which ought to have modified the application of those principles. Here again the colonies were the victims, and this was the worst of all their former sufferings; but he believed that in the end sugar would be dearer by the policy pursued, as this country well deserved it should be, for having criminally as well as foolishly departed from the principles of justice and humanity, and resolved, from a desire of getting cheap sugar by means of free trade, to encourage the African slavetrade. The just retribution of our shortsighted and guilty policy, would be the dearth of sugar, which we had hoped to make cheap. In all these instances our fellow-countrymen in the colonies had had inflicted on them by the policy of the mother country evils against which they had struggled in vain, and the results of which gave them an ample right to protection and favour, which in this case was but strict justice. Therefore he should give no opposition to the further proceedings on this Bill, though it was coupled with the advance of aid to the colonies in question for the purpose of meeting the expenditure which had already been incurred for the immigration of free labourers. That was now a debt, whether rightly or wrongly incurred, to be discharged. But he could not see the question of the immigration of free labourers introduced to their Lordships' notice by the present Bill, without entering, after the most ample consideration of the subject, his protest against the whole of that system. With respect to the Coolies, the expense would render it impossible to carry it into effect; but on all other grounds he was opposed to the speculation of introducing into our colonies on a large scale persons sent over from Africa. With all the knowledge which fifty years' advocacy of the abolition of slavery and the slave trade gave him—with all the information which he was able to glean from the works and the statements of various parties—it was his unhesitating opinion that any plan for the extensive importation from Africa of free negroes to the Mauritius or to our West Indian colonies (and, in order to be of any use, it was admitted that it must be extensive), could not by possibility do otherwise than degenerate into a revival and extension of the African slave trade. It was impossible, by any regulations or by any system of checks or of control, to prevent the exportation of the inhabitants from such a conntry as

Africa becoming a traffic in African slaves. Let them talk as they might about regulations; human avarice, human love of gain, and human fraud would evade them. They could have no means of preventing the evils of the African slave trade being revived, if they allowed a general system on a large scale of the immigration to our colonies of what were called free labourers from Africa. Under such a system he contended that they could not prevent large numbers of persons from being kidnapped in the interior of Africa, and then sent down to the coast and shipped as free emigrants. Then the great sacrifice of human life resulting from the middle passage would be renewed, because, if any system of immigration was to be of any use, there must be a general supply of as many negroes as might be wanted. The noble and learned Lord here referred, in order to show the mortality likely to ensue from a general system of immigration, to the result of the transport of a party of immigrants in Her Majesty's steamer *Growler*. The number of immigrants embarked was 445; the vessel was 18½ days on her passage, and during that time 10 per cent of the immigrants died, and a considerable amount of them were landed in a state of suffering from ill-health. He was most anxious to help in dispelling the delusion under which many of the West Indians and others laboured, that anything could be honestly effected by free immigration from Africa equal to their requirements. It would only be the slave trade under another name. In connexion with this subject, he must observe, that the eyes of other countries were on England in these respects. He had a letter from Paris taunting this country with her measures of free trade in respect to sugar; and, crossing the Atlantic, what said Mr. Calhoun? He said—

> "Let England no longer talk against us and taunt us with our slave population in Virginia, Carolina, and Georgia. England is now engaged in reviving the African slave trade under the specious pretext of importing African free labourers."

He never would allow it to be said that he or those with whom he was accustomed to act ever entertained any doubt whatever that it had always been one of their first duties to make war upon the African slave trade, and to carry on that war without ceasing, by all lawful means. They should never allow it to be said that they had engaged in such an undertaking, and had failed in it, attempting that which they were unable to accomplish. It was said that Spain and Portugal still carried on the slave trade; but what was that to us? We were not Spain or Portugal. Others might not follow the example of England, though he hoped that eventually many would do so; but, whether they did or did not, England had done her duty. We had "removed the accursed thing from our camp." Then, he would say, let all possible encouragement be given at home to those who laboured against every species of slavery; let this most holy warfare be urged against the execrable African slave trade until the object against which our hostility was waged ceased to exist otherwise than as matter of history. He doubted not that in the long-run all other countries would join with us in declaring the slave trade to be piracy: there was evidently no moral distinction between stealing a chattel out of a ship or robbing its crew, and the crime of robbing an the coast of Africa, and carrying the acquisitions so made across the common highway of nations, which was polluted by the guilty passage. Let all nations be induced to unite in declaring that a trade in human beings was piracy, and then there would be an end to the slave trade. It was not a true representation of the fact to say that our efforts made things worse, and that our attempts to improve the state of the negro had a tendency to deteriorate his condition. For such statements there was no rational foundation; but whatever men might say, he and those with whom he was accustomed to act, had done their duty; and, having attained their present position, let there be no backsliding—let them have no more of feeding the great labour-market of the west with immigration, which was neither more nor less than a return to the slave trade. He had no objection to the grant of money for the purposes contemplated by the Bill; but he could not let the present opportunity pass without recording his unabated hostility to the slave trade, and his protest against all and every measure that tended to revive or extend it.

Lord WHARNCLIFFE referred to a despatch from the Governor of Antigua, who suggested that two or three or a greater number of estates, might carry on their operations in one set of buildings. Economy, he thought, would be greatly promoted by means of united buildings.

Earl GREY said, that in the application of the sums to be granted under the proposed measure, the precedents supplied by former occasions would be followed as nearly as possible. It was intended to assist various estates in the re-establishment of works which had been injured by the recent hurricanes. It would, of course, be impossible peremptorily to dictate to proprietors the manner in which those moneys were to be applied; but, if he were to express an opinion on the subject, he should say that in as many cases as possible the principle of united works ought to be adopted. Two or three estates might easily be served by one set of works. He should not go over again, with the noble and learned Lord opposite, the course of policy which that noble and learned Lord had thought it fitting to bring under the notice of the House. Other occasions would arise upon which such a discussion could be much more advantageously taken than in considering the Bill now before them. As to the general policy of introducing free labourers into our West India colonies, the noble and learned Lord said it would amount to nothing less than a revival of the slave trade in another shape. Upon that point he should just take the liberty of observing, that a wide difference existed between bringing freemen from Africa, and carrying slaves from that part of the world. The noble and learned Lord, in order to show that that practice would be a revival of the slave trade, was bound to prove, first, that those labourers were bought, and, secondly, that they were treated as slaves. Now, neither of those conditions could be performed. If not bought, they could not be sold, and, if not treated as slaves, they must be regarded in the light of freemen. As men could not be bought or sold in the West Indies, as it was no man's interest to buy, the practice had altogether ceased; no complaint therefore, could now be fairly made on behalf of the working population of the West Indies; and it was commonly said that there the master was a slave, and the working man a master; for the working classes could dictate their own terms. The noble and learned Lord, as it appeared to him, had most unjustly said, that the existing practice revived the horrors of the middle passage; he also complained of the mortality which had prevailed on board the *Growler*—a mortality which could easily have been accounted for by the heat of the climate as well as the heat on board which the steam and the working of the machinery occasioned. A fever conseqently broke out in the vessel, and that was the great cause of the mortality. But amongst our troops, as well as our sailors, there had been a mortality exceeding ten per cent on a voyage. The total mortality in all the emigrant ships last year, was just the same as on board the *Growler.* If their Lordships referred to the report of the Emigration Commissioners for 1845, they would find the results of the voyages in the years 1843 and 1844. In those years there were 1,519 emigrants, and the Commissioners said that in fourteen voyages from Sierra Leone, ten were performed without the occurrence of a single casualty, and in the remaining four the whole number of deaths was only eleven; that is, the number of emigrants mentioned had been conveyed from Africa to the British colonies with the loss of only eleven lives. The Commissioners added, that this result was the more striking, considering that in two of the vessels the small-pox broke out. In one month of 1848, out of 159 liberated Africans embarked, only five had died. He denied that this system would lead to a revival of the slave trade; and, least of all, to the revival of the horrors of the middle passage. The emigration was purely voluntary; but he lamented to say that the erroneous notions which had been circulated in Africa had had the effect, to a certain extent, of stopping emigration. The natives had been told that they were to be taken away and killed, in order that their blood might be used for some purpose. He believed, that if the cultivation of sugar in the British colonies were not to be stopped, this species of emigration was of the greatest importance to those colonies; that the introduction of the imported negroes would have a beneficial effect upon the resident negroes. The competition of the imported negroes would be of great advantage in bringing down the extravagant rate of wages. It could not be attended with advantage to the negroes themselves that the wages should be kept up at their present extravagant rate; and the competition had already been attended with great advantage in this respect, by giving to the resident negroes a motive to labour, and preventing the planters from being at the entire mercy of their labourers. He had been gratified to receive evidence from various quarters, that the negroes who had been introduced into our colonies had rapidly assimilated with the resident negro population. It was a fact worthy of mention, that the *Growler* had carried back from Africa some negro labourers who had large sums of money, the produce of their earnings, and that they had recommended the Kroomen to go to Guiana, where they would obtain the same advantages. Those negroes who went back to their native country, after a sojourn in a British colony, might do more to diffuse knowledge, and to civilise their country, than could be effected by any other means hitherto suggested. He believed, if we continued for a few years to carry negroes or voluntary emigrants to our colonies, and returned them to Africa, that, whilst we should do much to benefit our colonies, we should gradually civilise Africa. He submitted to their Lordships that there were sufficient grounds for these measures which had been introduced by Her Majesty's Government, and that they were not liable to the censure which had been cast upon them.

Earl WALDEGRAVE addressed some observations to the House, but they were wholly inaudible.

House in Committee. Bill reported.
House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, June 6, 1848.

Minutes.] Petitions Presented. By Mr. Buck, from Bideford, Devon, for a Better Observance of the Lord's Day.—By Mr. F. Mackenzie, from the Royal Burgh of Peebles, for an Alteration of the Lunatic Asylums (Scotland) Bill.

COUNTY COURTS.

Mr. H. BERKELEY begged to ask a question of the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department respecting the County Courts Act. It appeared that somewhere about 600,559*l*. had been received under the operation of that Act, of which only 345,122*l*. had reached the suitors, showing the monstrous return of nearly 50 per cent for fees. Now, he thought that a subject well worthy of the attention of the Government, and begged to ask if it was the intention of the right hon. Gentleman to revise the Act as far as it related to the scale of fees?

Sir G. GREY said, that the matter was under the consideration of the Government, and he should shortly be enabled to state what would be decided as to the scale of fees.

JUVENILE POPULATION.

Lord ASHLEY:* The House will, I am sure, excuse me, not only for bringing under their deliberation the subject of which I have given notice, but also for intreating their most patient attention. It has been my lot, on many occasions, to introduce questions very deeply affecting the condition of the working classes; but on no occasion have I ever introduced a subject more vitally interesting to the parties that I represented, or more intimately connected with the honour and welfare of the whole community.

Of the existence of the evil no one can doubt who perambulates the streets and thoroughfares of this vast city, and observes the groups of filthy, idle, tattered children either squatting at the entrances of the courts and alleys, or engaged in occupations neither useful to themselves, nor creditable to the locality. If he proceed to estimate their moral by their physical condition (and it will be a just estimate)—if he examine the statements before the police offices, or the records of the various tribunals—or, above all, if, by personal inspection, he seek to understand the whole mischief, he will come to the conclusion that these pressing and immediate evils must be met by the application of an immediate remedy. This state of things afflicts every sense of humanity; it appeals to every notion of justice; and I must say, in reference to the character of the age and the temper of the times in which we live, that it is matter for grave consideration to all who consult, not only the reputation, but even the safety, of this great metropolis.

I am happy to say that this is no controversial question; no interest is assailed—I cannot anticipate any opposition except from those who believe that they can suggest a better plan; and, indeed, it is less from any overweening confidence that I have hit the true method, than from a desire to excite discussion, and stimulate general effort, that I have propounded this matter for our present debate.

I may, perhaps, assume that the evil is acknowledged, but I do not think that it is fully estimated. I wish much to show the nature and extent of the mischief, to prove that it cannot be dealt with in any ordinary way, nor brought under the separate influence of any existing agencies—the evil is peculiar, and must be met by peculiar means, administered by a peculiar agency.

Till very recently, the few children that came under our notice in the streets and places of public traffic, were considered to be chance vagrants, beggars, or pilferers, who, by a little exertion of magisterial authority, might be either extinguished or reformed. It has, only of late, been discovered that they constitute a numerous class, having habits, pursuits, feelings, manners, customs, and interests of their own; living as a class, though shifting as individuals, in the same resorts; perpetuating and multiplying their filthy numbers. For the knowledge of these details we are mainly indebted to the London City Mission; it is owing to their deep, anxious, and constant research; it is owing to the zeal with which their agents have fathomed the recesses of human misery, and penetrated into places repulsive to every sense, moral and physical; it is owing to such exertions, aided by the piety, self-denial, and devotion, of Sunday-school teachers, that we have advanced thus far. Certain excellent persons, who gave their energies to Sabbath-training, were the first to observe these miserable outcasts; and hoping, by the influence of the gospel, to effect some amendment, opened schools in destitute places, to which the children were invited, not coerced. Hence the clue to a vast amount of information, a part of which I shall now proceed to lay before the House.

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* From a corrected Report.

Our first consideration must have reference to the numbers of this particular class. It is difficult to form an accurate estimate; but from all the inquiries that I have been able to make—and I can assure the House that no trouble has been spared —I should say that the naked, filthy, roaming, lawless, and deserted children, in and about the metropolis, exceeded, rather than fell short of, 30,000. There are, doubtless, many more in this vast city who may be considered as distressed children, objects of charity and of the public care; but I speak now of that generation in particular, which is distinct from the ordinary poor, and beyond the observation of the daily perambulators of squares and thoroughfares.

The House will, perhaps, be curious to learn what are the habits and dispositions of this wild race; their pursuits, modes of livelihood, the character of their dwelling-places, and the natural history, as it were, of the species, so that some steps may be taken to extricate them from their sad condition, and place them in a situation where the exercise of virtue may at least be possible. Depend upon it, that while they are left in their present state, and exposed to all the detestable circumstances that surround them, the efforts of the clergyman and the missionary will be in vain; you undo with one hand the work of the other; it is the Penelope's web, woven in the morning but unravelled at night.

Now look at the result of an examination of 15 schools in which these children are occasionally congregated; I find the number on the lists to amount to 2,345, ranging between five and seventeen years of age; but the average attendance may be taken at 1,600. Now of these 1,600, 162 confessed that they had been in prison, not once, nor twice, many of them several times; 116 had run away from their homes, the result, in many instances, of ill-treatment; 170 slept in lodging-houses, and on this head I shall say a few words presently. I may just observe, in passing, that these receptacles are the nests of every abomination that the mind of man can conceive; 253 confessed that they lived altogether by begging; 216 had neither shoes nor stockings, 280 had no hats, caps, bonnets, or head covering; 101 had no linen; 219 never slept in beds, many had no recollection of having ever tasted that luxury; 68 were the children of convicts; 125 had stepmothers, to whom may be traced much of the misery that drives the children of the poor to the commission of crime; 306 had lost either one or both parents, a large proportion having lost both. Now, taking the average attendance at the schools as 4,000, and applying to it the calculations applied to the number just stated, we shall have 400 who confess that they had been in prison; 660 who lived by begging; 178 the children of convicts; and 800 who had lost one or both parents!

So much for their domestic position. Their employments are in strict keeping; we may class them as street-sweepers, venders of lucifer-matches, oranges, cigars, tapes, and ballads; they hold horses, run on errands, job for "dealers in marine stores;" such is the euphonous term for "receivers of stolen goods," a body of large influence in this metropolis, without whose agency juvenile crime would be much embarrassed in its operations. See, too, where many of them retire for the night, if they retire at all; to all manner of places; under dry arches of bridges and viaducts; under porticoes, sheds, and carts; to outhouses in sawpits, on staircases, in the open air, and some in lodging-houses. Curious, indeed, is their mode of life. I recollect the case of a boy who, during the inclement season of last winter, passed the greater part of his night in the large iron roller of the Regent's Park. He climbed, every evening, over the railings, and crept to his shelter, where he lay in comparative comfort. Human sympathy, however, prevails even in the poorest condition; he invited a companion less well provided than himself, promising to "let him into a good thing;" he did so, and it proved a more friendly act than many a similar undertaking in railway shares.

Let me proceed now to the lodging-houses. I attach no small importance to the review of this part of the subject, because I know how many of these unfortunate children are doomed to live in these sinks of wretchedness and vice; and how difficult, if not impossible, it is to deal with them by any ordinary means, so long as they are forced to resort to such haunts of pollution. I will trouble you to listen to the descriptions of a lodging-house. I have seen many of them myself, and they are abominable; but the statement I shall now read is given on the authority of a city missionary, who had been appointed to inspect these dens, and report upon them. It is not an exaggerated picture of several of those places, in which hundreds and thousands of the human race are nightly congregated. The "parlour"—you will observe the elegance of the terms—

> "The parlour measures 18 feet by 10. Beds are arranged on each side of it, composed of straw, rags, and shavings. Here are twenty-seven male and female adults and thirty-one children, with several dogs; in all, fifty-eight human beings in a contracted den, from which light and air are systematically excluded. It is impossible to convey a just idea of their state—the quantities of vermin are amazing. I have entered a room, and in a few minutes I have felt them dropping on my hat from the ceiling like peas. 'They may be gathered by handfuls,' observed one of the inmates. 'I could fill a pail in a few minutes. I have been so tormented with the itch, that on two occasions I filled my pockets with stones, and waited till a policeman came up, and then broke a lamp that I might be sent to prison, and there be cleansed, as is required before new-comers are admitted.' 'Ah!' said another, standing by, 'you can get a comfortable snoose and scrub there.'"

But nowhere else it is manifest—the jail is a resource for these unfortunate people. Many boys of tender years frequent these houses; and not a few of them are for the promiscuous reception of boys and girls. I press on these matters, because I wish to show the variety of circumstances that stand in the way of their moral and physical improvement—here is a proof in the existence of such resorts! Inquire, and you will find it to be true, not only of the metropolis, but of the smaller as well as greater towns throughout the country, that seven-tenths of the crime perpetrated in the various localities are concocted by the society that assemble in these caverns. The Warwick magistrates say, and it is equally applicable to London—

> "Such houses are the general receptacle of offenders. Here the common vagrants assemble in great numbers at nightfall, and, making the lodging-houses the common centre, traverse their several beats. I have no hesitation (says a public officer), in declaring my belief that the principal robberies have been concocted in a vagrant lodging-house, and rendered effectual through the agency of the keepers."

But this is not all. When a boy leaves the lodging-house, and emerges into the open air, he is exposed to influences quite as deleterious to his moral and physical well-being. I will read a description of a court which I have witnessed myself. Now observe, it is in such places that a large mass of the community are now dwelling. In one of those courts there are three privies to 300 people: in another two to 200 people. This is a statement made by a medical man:—

> "In a place where these public privies existed, scenes of the most shocking character were of daily occurrence. It would scarcely be believed that those public privies often stood opposite the doors of the houses; modesty and decency were altogether impossible."

But in a private house—what a strange misnomer!—is the boy exposed to better influences than in the lodging-house? Very often several families are found in one room. That is a fortunate family which has one room for itself. Everything is transacted in that room. Cleanliness is impossible; it is a scene of filth, misery, and vice. The House will now, I hope, permit me to pass to the description of a locality which affords a fair sample of this class of abodes; for those children are a peculiar race, to be found in almost all instances in the most filthy, destitute, unknown parts of the metropolis—places seldom trodden by persons of decent habits.

> "These courts and alleys are in the immediate neighbourhood of uncovered sewers, of gutters full of putrified matter, nightmen's yards, and privies, the soil of which is openly exposed, and never or seldom removed. It is impossible to convey an idea of the poisonous condition in which those places remain during winter and summer, in dry weather and wet, from the masses of putrifying matter which are allowed to accumulate."

Now these statements are by no means exaggerations. I would not make such assertions if I could not do so on my own personal knowledge. I have gone over many parts of those districts, and have devoted a considerable portion of my time to the prosecution of investigations on this subject. When, in 1846, I lost my seat in Parliament, and finding myself *studiis florentem ignobilis oti,* I determined to explore the unknown parts of the metropolis. In company with a medical man and a city missionary, I have ventured to go over many of those places, and I am able to say that the description I have now given is below the truth. And sure I am, that if I could persuade any hon. Member to visit those disgusting localities, there would be no more need for argument or description; they would join, one and all, in a general effort to wipe away a state of things so disgraceful to the kingdom, and so injurious to the peace and welfare of the whole community.

The House will have anticipated, I think, the statement of their physical condition. The children are thus described by Dr. Aldis :—

> "They are emaciated, pale, and thin, and in a low condition. They complain of sinking, depression of the strength, loss of spirits, loss of appetite accompanied by pains in different parts of the body, with disturbed sleep. The depressed and low condition of health in which these people are always found, induces habits of interperance, unfortunately so common among them. The children are diminutive, pale, squalid, sickly, irritable; I rarely saw a child in a really healthy state."

One of the most pious, intelligent, and active clergymen of London, the Rev. Mr. Champneys, of Whitechapel, has told me of the singular aptitude of those children to learn. He could only attribute it to their nervous susceptibility, produced by the circumstances in which they were placed. But he added, that while it would enable them to learn what was good, the readiness with which they learned what was bad was most alarming. The condition of those children is very peculiar. Their nervous susceptibility is stimulated, so that they acquire instruction with a promptitude and activity beyond their years. Their energies are quick and lively; but they are speedily exhausted, and come to a premature grave. Many, from the condition in which they have been brought up, are greatly enfeebled; and though much may be done to restore their health and strength by giving them proper food, and allowing them to breathe a purer air, yet upon examination it is often found that these children have all some defect or other which is sufficient to exclude them from employment. A friend of mine, a Lord of the Admiralty, had arranged that if any of those children could be selected who were fit for employment, they should be taken on board a ship in Her Majesty's service. Five were sent to be examined; but in the twinkling of an eye the examiner rejected them, though they were the picked boys of the school. But after those children had been for a few months at the school, where they were fed and brought under proper care, they appeared to be changed. They became strengthened, fit for work, and showed to what condition they may arrive, when recovered from the neglect to which they had been originally abandoned. If they are only placed where they may breathe fresh air and receive a moderate supply of food, they will become as efficient for the purposes of labour as any children to be found in any part of Her Majesty's dominions, for the disease from which those children in their original condition suffered is of that kind which arises from bad air and from the want of sufficient sustenance. There is a school for such children in the neighbourhood of the House where we are now sitting; there they get sufficient food; and they are, in consequence, fit for any labour to which children can be put; and if such an opportunity again offers itself as had been offered by my noble Friend the Lord of the Admiralty, I have no doubt that a number of them would be passed, because they would be found fully competent for the labour.

Of their moral condition I need say little beyond the report of one of the schools :—

> "The boys had been sent out daily by drunken parents to beg and steal, being often cruelly treated if unsuccessful: others were employed in vending and assisting in the manufacture of base coin. . . . Another says, of 74 admitted this year between 8 and 14, known thieves, 16; beggars and hawkers, 27."

But there is a most remarkable statement made on the authority of a city missionary in a district of the east of London. His house is the open resort of all who choose to come to pay him a visit, and ask his advice. From January to December he received from these children and young persons, 2,343 visits, averaging 334 per month. Of these, under ten years of age, there were 2 per cent; under twelve, 9 per cent; above twelve and under fifteen, 44 per cent; above fifteen and under eighteen, 37 per cent; above eighteen and under twenty-two, 8 per cent. Of these 39 per cent voluntarily acknowledged they had been in prison; 11 per cent had been in once; 4 per cent, twice; 5 per cent, thrice; 2 per cent, four times; 1 per cent, six times; 3 per cent, seven times; 1 per cent, eight times; 2 per cent, ten times; and there were 10 per cent uncertain as to the number of times.

This is a curious picture of juvenile society in the great metropolis! And whence has it arisen? From various causes: it has arisen, in a great measure, either from the desertion or the bad example of parents. In many instances it is good for the children that they have been deserted; in many instances, no doubt, it is good that they have no parents in existence, for not unfrequently they are misled by their bad example—still more frequently are they tempted by necessity. There are hundreds and thousands in this great city who, from their earliest years, have never obtained a meal except by begging, or by stealing, or by some avocation of a questionable kind. Children, in truth, are encouraged by their parents to that course of life. Even in those instances where parents do not bring up their children to habits of theft, they take very good care when property is brought in of a suspicious character to ask no questions, and to bestow praise for adroitness in such transactions.

But whence are the parents affected? A vast proportion of the evils which surround them arises from the sanitary condition in which they are left. The same causes which operate on the children operated on the parents before them—an irresistible depression of health, a gradual, but certain, decline of the physical energies, followed by intemperate habits, and a hopeless pauperism, have rendered them utterly reckless of decency, of comfort, of regard for the spiritual and temporal welfare of their children, reckless almost even of life itself.

With these facts under its notice, the House will not be surprised to learn the figure that these children cut before the courts of the police, and the tribunals of justice. We may see, from the reports of the metropolitan police, reports drawn up with much skill and accuracy, that in the year 1847 there were taken into custody 62,181 persons, of all ages, and of both sexes. Of these 20,702 were females, and 41,479 were males; whereof there were, under twenty years of age, 15,698; between ten and fifteen, 3,682; under ten, 362. Of the whole 62,000, 22,075 could neither read nor write; and 35,227 could read only, or read and write imperfectly. I do not quote this statement from any belief that mere literary attainments will have a very material influence in amending the conduct of the young; but I quote it to show the neglect in which they must have passed their early years; the want of all internal or external discipline, during the most impressible period of life, when moral instruction is most easily communicated. But mark another striking statement at the close of the tables; out of these 62,000 persons taken into custody, there were no less than 28,118 who had no trade, business, calling, or occupation whatsoever. They were merely vagabonds living by their wits, wandering from one place to another, and making the whole world a prey for their subsistence.

Now, when we bear in mind the condition of these children, is it surprising that there should be such a mass of persons without any employment? Thousands in tattered garments, unable to read or write, known only as wandering beggars, may offer themselves as applicants for work—is it not obvious that, untrained as they are, no one will engage them, more especially when such a pressure exists that oftentimes the best workmen are compelled to sustain a severe struggle? Few, however, make any application, because they are sure to be rejected. But it is a serious fact, that so many thousands should be habituated to idleness, or that diseased activity which is the result of it; because they think that they have a necessity for living as much as any other, and they take measures accordingly. Nor may we disregard the temper of the times: the condition of these persons renders the state of society more perilous than in any former day; be assured that the mischief does not admit of delay; the Legislature is called on to make an immediate effort for the mitigation, if not the total overthrow, of this portentous evil.

The statements that I have already made afford but a mode of approximating to the extent of the evil; the records of the tribunals and police courts show only the numbers of those whom the constable is quick enough to apprehend. But there is a vast amount of unseen and undetected crime; many breaches of the public order; many injuries to the peace, property, and safety of individuals; and a great prevalence of that training which forms these children to a character perilous to the well-being of society. I believe that the majority of criminals, in and about London, arises out of this class; if we were to extinguish or greatly improve this strange tribe, we should not, I allow, extinguish crime altogether; crime is inseparable from our fallen nature; but I hold that it would be considerably abated, inasmuch as the large proportion of it is, manifestly, the work of the classes so neglected, and exposed, by their necessities, to an extraordinary force of temptation. A city missionary has written to me, "I look on several parts of my district as breeding places for prisons:" this is the concurrent testimony of all those who are best acquainted with the race before us; and how can it well be otherwise? Recollect the condition of these children; weigh their necessities, their moral state, the manner in which they have been brought up, the circumstances in which they are permitted to remain. Having no knowledge of right or wrong, except that which is begotten in some way or other by their fears; they believe that they have a right to prey on the whole world; "*meum* and *tuum*" depend not, in their estimation, on law or principle, but on the power to hold possession; their needs, so they conceive, giving them, not only a dexterity, but a claim, in appropriating the superfluities of others. Now, then, let me implore the House to consider the temptations to which poor children, thus morally provided, are exposed by the reprehensible carelessness of this commercial city; remember them living by their wits, hungry like ourselves, and not knowing, from one hour to another, whether they shall obtain anything for their sustenance during the day; look at the temptations which beset them on every side, temptations often commented on, and most justly, in the police courts, arising from the total want of care in the owners of property. I find, that of the felonies which were perpetrated last year within the jurisdiction of the metropolitan police, there were 814 cases of stealing tools, &c., from unfinished houses where they had been left by workmen without any care or supervision whatever; that the number of cases of stealing from carts and carriages which had been left without any one to look after them was 298; that the number of cases of theft from houses in consequence of the doors being left open by the most wanton neglect on the part of servants and masters was 2,208; and that the number of cases of theft of goods exposed for sale at shop-doors—and hon. Gentlemen will recollect how freely goods of all descriptions are so exposed, especially of all kinds of provisions, calculated to tempt the appetite of hungry children—of these cases the number was 2,299. Now, every one of these felonies has increased in number, with the exception—and this is a very curious fact—with the exception of felonies of linen exposed to dry. These have considerably abated; and I hardly hesitate to assert that this has arisen from the establishment of public baths and washhouses, which enable poor people to wash and dry their clothes by a cheap and speedy process, and keep them under proper care and supervision.

All these things tend to show the necessity of adopting a course that shall extricate these children from their present position, and save them from a return to it. I, therefore, seek to prove that they are of such a singular description as to be beyond any ordinary appliances, requiring a system of their own, unlike all other children in most respects, and in none more than in their habits of insubordination. Take, for instance, the scenes that invariably occur on the opening of a school in some new locality. I have heard teachers, who have undertaken to open such schools on speculation—I do not mean a money speculation, but by way of experiment—I have heard them describe the roaring and whistling, the drumming at the doors, the rattling at the windows, which signalise the commencement of the academical course. The boys, when admitted, oftentimes break everything, forms, slates, tables, intermixing their sport with occasional fighting. There is a school over the water well known, I believe, to the hon. Member for Kinsale—when it was first opened, in 1846, there came four and twenty boys, all furnished with tobacco-pipes, who would neither learn nor dislodge, but kept possession of the room for several nights. The teachers waited with patience, trusting that they would soon be tired of their "lark," and go away, having left the school to those who desired better things. Their hope was fulfilled; others soon supplied their places; and now the school is in active operation, and is producing, thank God, most beneficial results. In another, the onslaught was of a sterner character; the teachers were compelled to barricade the doors, and escape through the windows over the roof. Such is the character of most inaugural meetings of these schools;

a fortnight or more elapses, in general, before order can be maintained; nor can it ever be introduced without the highest exercise of patience in encountering obstacles so unpleasant, and risks so peculiar. I heard from a gentleman, not long ago, who had himself officiated as a teacher, that he was once in charge of a class where a single boy was especially provoking. He bore it for a while, but at last could bear it no longer, and, seizing the boy by the neck, gave him a thorough good shaking. This passed off, and little was said; but in three minutes thereafter the teacher found himself prostrate at full length on the ground. The boy, it seems, determined to be avenged for the insult which he considered he had received, got upon the floor, and, passing between the legs of the teacher, suddenly expanded them, with a shout of joy; and then, having thrown the gentleman on his back, he returned to his seat. Now, had the gentleman given way to his anger, and punished the boy for this offence, the result would probably have been that the school would have been broken up; but, exercising a more correct judgment, he took no notice of what had occurred. He saved his dignity by assuming that he had fallen down, and the boy, having obtained his redress, was fully satisfied—the school is now in effective operation, and I believe the boy is become a diligent and obedient pupil.

Sometimes it has been necessary to call in the aid of the police to preserve a semblance of order. This necessity gave rise, in one instance, to a remarkable event. One of the policemen called in was himself a philanthropist, and also a bit of a scholar; and he thought that he should most effectually attain his end by taking a class; he did so, and then the whole school became like "the happy family," which may be seen any day in Trafalgar-square. So great was the enthusiasm of the boys for the constable that they gave him the title, which I believe he still retains, of "King of the Peelers." Now, you must bear in mind that these descriptions are applicable to the entire class; and that all who institute ragged schools must be prepared for similar events and situations—but if they are so resolved, and exhibit forbearance, sympathy, and real love for these pariahs of society, I hesitate not to say that they will reap a larger harvest than may be won from many schools, where the children have been trained to easier lives and in habits of constant indulgence.

Now look to another peculiarity which forms an obstacle in the way of those who would proceed by established methods. See their comparative attendance at different seasons. These children are not accustomed to ordinary rules; they have never been subjected to domestic discipline, and they have no notion of being forced. They may be invited, they may be soothed, they may be gained by attention; but in general they will have their own way. I find that summer is peculiarly attractive to them, and that it is difficult during that season to obtain an adequate attendance. They are drawn away to prowl about the country. Many of them go great distances in pursuit of something which they call pleasure, or they may call profit—their views and projects are best known to themselves—but, whatever are their motives, certain it is they are often drawn away in summer to great distances. I perceive, from a report of the comparative attendance at the school in the Broadway, Westminster, that the number of children who attend in winter is 200, while at the present season, June, the average attendance is not more than forty. This comparatively thin attendance arises also from the circumstance of the fine weather tempting them to remain in the streets to a later hour, begging or stealing, or selling the little articles they have to dispose of.

If such be their habits, the House will see that it is next to impossible to bind them down by ordinary rules, and make them conform to regulations which are salutary, and even palatable, to children accustomed to something of domestic discipline; the class has been newly discovered, and must be grappled with on a new system.

In confirmation of what I say, observe their migratory habits; how they shift from one part of London to another, and from the town to the country. In the report of the school at Broadwall it is stated, that out of 507 boys admitted, very few who attended at the beginning of the year remained to the end of it. One of the city missionaries, stationed in Westminster, has assured me that one-fourth of the population in his district migrate every month. Why, what can you do, with your ordinary rules and traditional methods, in the management of such people? Nothing—you must hold out to them some inducement to break their habits. Government, I must think, knowing the nature of this class, and knowing also that it has sprung from our neglect, and the neglect of our fathers, is in duty bound either to remove the temptations to which these children are exposed, or render them less attractive, or enable the youngsters, by the hope of recompense, to resist the temptations so freely thrown in their path. Their whole mode of life is perplexing, and defies all existing agency. Observe, they can come to the schools only in the evening. It is to no purpose to open a day-school, unless we also provide the food; and this addition inflicts a vast augmentation of expense. During the morning they are engaged in various avocations to obtain the sustenance necessary for the day; but this obligation alone is sufficient to take them out of the category of those children, who can submit to regularity of attendance, and conform to canonical hours.

Now, Sir, to meet the exigencies of this case, the case of these many thousands of children, I have heard a variety of propositions; but I cannot concur in any one of them. I have heard it said, in the first place, that schools should be erected, and some system introduced of national education. Now, this cannot be undertaken, because the very instant any one proposes such a measure, the *vexata questio* is raised, as to how children should be trained—whether by a secular or a religious education—and, if by a religious education, what sort of religion, whether that of the Church of England or of a mixed character—and while we are discussing what we shall do on these questions, hundreds and thousands of the children are rising up into the ranks of thieves, and perhaps murderers.

Nor can we at once undertake to establish schools of this description. We must first consider a new element; we must consider the expediency and the practicability of not only teaching but feeding the pupils. It is a novel matter, and one of great importance.

I must again repeat, in reference to the proposition of erecting such schools, that we have no existing agencies by which they may be superintended and controlled. The Church has none; she is far too feeble amid the larger populations. The British and Foreign Society have none; the National Society is alike powerless. It is clear that they cannot be admitted into the schools already established; if they were so, their admission would be followed by the withdrawal of the "respectable" children—such is the term. The parents of a better class would shrink, and not reprehensibly, from the moral and physical contamination of these wretched outcasts.

It is next proposed, that grants may be made by the Privy Council, and schools established, subject to an inspection. Now, no doubt, if such schools were established, they would do a certain degree of good; but it would be altogether inadequate to the evil which prevails. In the first place, I do not hesitate to say, that it would be next to impossible for Her Majesty's Government to appoint an inspector capable of estimating the character and value of all the difficulties and dilemmas to which these schools would be exposed; they could never be conformed to his notions of discipline. And neither of these plans would meet the difficulty of determining how these children were to be disposed of after they are educated. We should still have the same mass of unemployed poor, still the same temptations, and still the same impossibility of resisting them. Now, the third plan which I have heard proposed is, the erection of a large barrack at some distance from London, at which the great mass of these children should receive their education. This is designated the hospital system. Now, this has been tried to a great extent in Scotland, and has been found most injurious, bringing up the children, as it does, in a mode of life which is in no respect their mode of life in after years; abstracting them for three or four years from all connexion with home, and from all domestic relations, and training them exclusively within four walls. It has been found in all instances—in the workhouse schools and elsewhere—very far from answering the purposes for which such institutions are established.

But I entertain another very strong objection to a wholesale removal of the children from home, carrying them far away, and shutting them up in some large receptacle. No doubt, in many instances, it would be better if the children were removed from their parents—it would often be better if they had no parents at all; but I must lay it down as a general rule that home discipline, however imperfect, is of a beneficial character, and cannot be supplied by any other system employed elsewhere. We must also recollect, that one great object of instituting these schools is to produce a proportionate effect upon the parents of the children, their relatives, friends, and associates. In most instances, it has been found almost vain to attempt the reformation of adults by direct efforts. It has been tried in various ways. In our prison discipline ingenuity is at a stand-still to discover by what means we can effect the permanent reformation of delinquents of riper years. They have been found, in most instances, altogether inaccessible to the labours of the clergyman and the missionary. But very frequently an approach to them is open through the medium of the children. I could mention hundreds of instances where the example of children has brought the parents, by shame or precept, to habits of decency and order; and I feel confident that if we had the means of extending this system, and holding out the prospect of benefit to such parties from the reformation of their lives) we should be able to produce the most striking and permanent effects upon many abandoned localities within this vast metropolis.

Now, to meet the many difficulties I have referred to, there has been set up, at various intervals, the system of ragged schools. Many, I dare say, may take exception to the name. I will not detain the House by attempting to prove the value and efficacy of the title. It is sufficient to say, that I know many instances where the name, so far from being repulsive, has been attractive to that very peculiar class; and, though it designates those whom we receive, it does not always designate those whom we turn out. They are received ragged, but they are turned out clothed—they are received as heathens, and in many instances, I thank God, they go out Christians. Many such schools have been established, not only in London but in other parts of England. They have proved themselves, thereby, to be adapted to the necessities of the times; for the principles upon which they are founded recommend themselves to the judgment of those who are most conversant with the class. But to proceed; the number of ragged schools in London and neighbourhood is now about sixty. The number of children who pass through them—including those who attend on Sunday—is estimated at 10,000. This is not the average attendance, because the greater number attend only on the Sabbath.

The position of these schools, and their mode of government, should next be stated to the House. They are generally planted in some miserable locality; we are fortunate enough, in a few instances, to obtain a good room; in one or two a room has been erected at the expense of some charitable person; in others we are obliged to rest content with converted stables, and such like inconvenient places. They are opened, generally, every evening at six o'clock; the teachers are in some cases voluntary, in others they are paid. The children are taught to read, write, and cast accounts; and are carefully trained in the great precepts and doctrines of Christianity. The promoters of these schools have been beset by a variety of difficulties; they have been discouraged by want of funds, and all those manifold and divers failures that wait on every novel and infant institution; but they have, nevertheless, had greater success than they had at first presumed to anticipate. They have obtained situations for many of their pupils, and in no instance have any been dismissed for bad conduct in service. These schools are conducted altogether on a very wide basis: the teachers consist of various denominations of Dissenters, as well as of the Church of England; and upon the committees Dissenting ministers and clergymen of the Established Church unite in the most hearty co-operation. Nothing can be more gratifying than to attend the periodical meetings, where all ecclesiastical differences are sunk; and all are pleased at seeing the plant thrive under their care.

An hon. Member asks me "What is the religious teaching?" I reply, that all these schools are under local committees. There is a central committee, of which I am chairman, and which holds its meetings in Exeter Hall, but it imposes no conditions upon those schools that are in union with it. We require no more, but in this we are positive, than that the Bible should be used in all its integrity. These meetings are held once a quarter, for the purpose, amongst others, of collecting funds, as far as we are able, and distributing them amongst the schools; but we leave it to the clergymen of the Church of England and the Dissenting ministers and other teachers to attend to the religious instruction.

We must take good care, in whatever we do for the advancement of this system, to do nothing that shall damp or discourage the voluntary principle; but though it may not be damped, it must be stimulated, as, unaided and by itself, it is quite inadequate to the purpose. We must rely on the local agency of the various districts, and the hearty and effective co-operation of the small tradesmen in the vicinity; the office is at first so physically offensive, and, for a long time, so morally disheartening, that ordinary service is unequal to the task.

The system, however, must, as I have said, be stimulated—and the proposition which I make to the Government is this—That the Government should agree to take every year from these schools a number of children, say 1,000—500 boys and the same number of girls — and transplant them at the public expense to Her Majesty's colonies in South Australia. When I make this proposition, of course I do not do so in a dictatorial manner; and if the Government only accede to it, they may vary it in detail precisely as they please. I mention South Australia, because in that colony there is at this moment the greatest demand for labour. I propose too that the removal of the children to that colony shall be the reward of good conduct, and that they shall have a certain amount of education; the test of that amount may be left to the Government, but of course with children of that class or condition the destiny for which they are intended must be looked to. It will not be necessary that the test should be of very high literary attainments; our object is rather to produce moral habits by moral inducements. Nor do I wish to assign any particular period for them to be at the school—so that they can fulfil the test imposed, I desire that their removal should be the reward of good conduct; this is all that can be required. The advantages of such a scheme will be indescribable. I am quite convinced, from all the inquiry I have been able to make, that it will produce a serious and permanent benefit upon the whole population of the country. When people see that their money will issue in something practicable, should these schools be instituted, and that the children will be decently trained, and afterwards removed from vice and temptation to some place where they may conduct themselves like honest citizens, they will contribute largely to establish many over the length and breadth of the metropolis—let us look then to the effect it will have upon the children themselves; miserable, ignorant, and forgotten as they are, those children, nevertheless, before they have passed three months at these schools, begin to aspire to better things. The right hon. Baronet the Home Secretary was good enough to accompany me some time ago to one of these schools. It was during working time; but had it not been so, and had the children been at liberty to run about, I doubt not, that, knowing the dignity of my right hon. Friend's station and the goodness of his heart, they would have beset him with applications to be sent to sea or to some one of the colonies. If therefore you will hold out to those children as the reward of good conduct that which they desire—a removal from scenes which it is painful to contemplate, to others where they can enjoy their existence—you will make the children eager by good conduct to obtain such a boon. There are, be assured, amongst the children, guilty and disgusting as they are, many thousands who if opportunites are given them, will walk in all the dignity of honest men and Christian citizens.

But at present they are like tribes of lawless freebooters, bound by no obligations, and utterly ignorant or utterly regardless of social duties. They trust to their skill, not to their honesty; gain their livelihood by theft, and consider the whole world as their legitimate prey. With them there is no sense of shame; nor is imprisonment viewed as a disgrace. In many instances it has occurred that after a boy has been a short time at one of these schools he suddenly disappears. At the end of a few weeks he comes back to the very spot in the school where he sat when he was last there. The master, going up to him says, "My boy, where have you been?" The boy answers, "Very sorry Sir, I could not come before, but I have had three weeks at Bridewell." Now this has happened repeatedly. Going to prison is with those children the ordinary lot of humanity—they look upon it as a grievous act of oppression, and when they come to school they speak of it as one gentleman would tell his wrongs to another. But, in the course of time, their hearts become alive to better things; knowing how low they have fallen in the scale of humanity, they desire to be removed to other scenes; and then it is that, if inducements are held out to them to hope—and God knows what is the condition of a human creature without hope—they would rise into the dignity of man, and acknowledge the opportunity afforded to them by the great goodness of Providence. I consider also that much beneficial effect will be derived from the parents seeing that something will be gained by the good conduct of their children. Their motives must not be scanned too narrowly.

Hon. Members should not judge them altogether by their own; these parents, no doubt, think more of the temporal than the moral welfare of their children, and will thus be influenced by temporal considerations; it is, nevertheless, a step towards amendment, and will, unquestionably, produce an extensive and healing effect.

But it may urged, is your plan feasible? I reply, that it is a practical proposition, and beneficial alike to the condition of the colonies. Hear the evidence of Mr. Cuninghame, of Port Philip, before the Lords' Committee on Emigration:—

> "The want of labour is by far the greatest impediment to the progress of the colony, either social or pecuniary. . . . . Four years have now elapsed, during which there has been scarcely any emigration. In the year 1844 there were about 1,400 people sent out; but, with that exception, emigration has been at a stand-still. The result is, that not only is labour extremely dear, but it is almost impossible to be got at all. The wool is worse got up, and everything but wool-growing is at a perfect stand-still from want of labour. I have no doubt that from Port Philip alone the value of the wool has been deteriorated to the value of 40,000*l.* in consequence of the deficiency of hands upon the last wool-clip alone."

Further on the same witness said—

> "The colony will absorb many more than we could count upon for future years. At present there is not merely a want of the regular annual supply which is demanded by the annual increase of both sheep and cattle, but there is a deficient supply of three years to make up, Many colonists have not built houses, nor fenced paddocks, nor made any improvements, owing to the want of labour. I think that, if 8,000 statute adults were introduced into Port Philip just now, the whole of them would be absorbed at good wages, and with abundant rations; . . . and that for three or four years to come 4,000 or 5,000 might be received each year."

I should be very glad if the Government would take these poor children and transplant some of them every year. I will not quarrel about the colony, for I am quite sure that under the right hon. Baronet and the noble Lord they will be fully protected. Mr. Cuninghame continued—

> "We can employ any species of labour, because shepherding is not an exhausting or fatiguing operation."

Exactly the labour for these children, and it is to this kind of work that I propose to send the lads who shall have exceeded their fourteenth year. As to the condition of the settled emigrants, the same gentleman also said—

> "Many instances have occurred of the change of labourers into proprietors. I believe that, amongst steady and intelligent men to set up for themselves after from five to eight years of labour is the rule; and to fail in doing so the exception."

In the *Times* of the 20th of May, 1848, I find the following extract from a letter dated Sydney, January 8:—

> "You must strain every nerve to send us relief, for fully three-fourths of the 5,000 emigrants now coming out will be instantly absorbed on landing, for domestic servants in Sydney, Melbourne, &c."

Observe, I do not propose to send them out under fourteen years of age. I have a statement which has been made to me by a gentleman who is well acquainted with the colonies. He says, that for every 1,000 sheep three persons at least are required, with wages of 20*l.* a year and weekly rations of 10 lb. beef, 12 lb. of flour, 2 lb. of sugar, quarter of a lb. of tea, and a house; thus at a station of 5,000 sheep, fifteen men and boys would be required. Taking the number of farms and stations at 4,000, and the number of servants in the bush at 12,000, this would make at each station but three, not one-half of what is necessary. Three, then, to each station would take at once 12,000; if, then, 1,000 were sent annually, it would be to each station only one every four years.

So much for the boys; now it is perfectly clear we could dispose of females far more easily; the demand, indeed, for them as domestic servants is so great, that a gentleman told me that when he quitted the colony, as he came down to the shore to embark, he found a young girl who had just landed; and so eager were five gentlemen to engage her as lady's maid to their wives, that she, knowing how valuable her services were, refused to take less than 50*l.* a year. Now these poor girls, above fourteen years of age, whom we see standing at the corners of the streets, filthy and wretched, selling oranges, matches, and ten thousand other things, many of whom come every evening to the ragged schools, would be rejoiced at the opportunity of being sent to another country. When the House considers that the males in Port Philip are to the females in a frightfully large proportion, how can they hesitate to believe that, if 20,000 of these miserable and distressed girls were transplanted to that settlement, they would at once be disposed of to advantage? And what does the House think is the excess in England of females over males, according to the last census? No less than 358,159. With such a disproportion, then, at Port Philip, can you doubt, if you will thus undertake the proposition I suggest, that no difficulty will be found in disposing of all those young women whom you will thus transplant from a life of misery to one of happiness and honour?

The Emigration Commissioners see no difficulty in the plan; they seem to think, so far as I am at liberty to quote them, that the scheme is perfectly practicable, and requires nothing to carry it out but a hearty determination. I trust that I shall not be met by an answer, that my proposition for those schools must be made for every other school where the poor may be educated, and so a system be begun of almost indefinite expense. In the first place, I have proved that these schools, and the children in them, are most peculiar—peculiar in their quality, and requiring a peculiar remedy. If you take, for instance, the whole average attendance of the children, which is about 4,000, and try it by the scale of crime and destitution I have mentioned before, you will conclude that of that number nearly 1,700 will have passed through the prisons, and 1,800 will have lost one or both parents.

In the next place, I doubt not that, in a financial point of view, it is a real economy. I have here a letter from a most intelligent gentleman, Mr. Smith, the governor of the prison at Edinburgh; now, attend to his words:—"In compliance with the request of the Committee of the Industrial School;"—and here the word "industrial" recalls to my mind a part of our system to which I must allude. We have established in some of these schools, industrial classes; and with the happiest effect. I am strongly of opinion that in every school where children are educated, who are hereafter to earn a livelihood by the sweat of their brow, some portion of the day or the week should be devoted to occupations of industry. Now, if it be desirable for ordinary children, it is doubly so for those to whom new notions must be imparted—notions that, when reclaimed from a lawless and wandering life, they will find industry to be both beneficial and honourable. These industrial classes have, in fact, obtained the greatest success; and labour, which, in other situations is regarded as a penalty, is here considered as a recompence. In the school at Westminster we inculcate this both by precept and by practice; the children are received naked —naked certainly, unless the beastly rags about them can be dignified by the name of clothing—and they are told, when furnished with the raw material, "you shall learn to make your own things, and whatever you can make for yourselves shall be your own;" industry is thereby greatly stimulated—they are divided into tailors and shoemakers; the tailors make clothes for themselves and then for their companions, and the shoemakers return the compliment. But this is Mr. Smith's letter:—

> "In compliance with the request of the Committee of the Industrial Ragged School, that I would inform them what had been the effect of the schools on juvenile crime, it affords me very great pleasure to say, that the number of commitments to prison, of boys of 13 years old and under, was about 50 per cent less in three months ended March last than in the corresponding three months of the last year; and that I think this most gratifying circumstance is mainly to be attributed to the influence of the ragged schools. It may be well for the public to know, that if 5*l.* a year be not paid for the education and maintenance of a little boy at the ragged school, 11*l.* a year will probably have to be paid for him at the prison in Edinburgh, or 17*l.* a year in the general prison in Perth."

Is the House aware of the costliness of crime to the country? Suppose, now, you vote 20,000*l.* a year for the ragged schools of the metropolis, or 100,000*l.* a year for the same throughout the whole kingdom; and this sum, remember, will elicit 200,000*l.* at least in addition, from private persons, public bodies, and benevolent societies—compare that grant of 100,000*l.* a year with the expenses of preventing and punishing crime; and see at once the true economy of the proposed plan. The expense of Parkhurst prison in the year 1847 was 14,349*l.*; of Pentonville, 18,307*l.* The total expense of prosecutions, removal, and subsistence of convicts, formerly paid out of county rates, is 348,000*l.* a year. I hear some one observe, "that item is for the punishment of adults;" why, to be sure it is; but is it not in infancy that the seed is sown? is not the child the prototype of the man? But I anticipated such a objection, and I put, therefore, this question to some of the most experienced missionaries: "Does it frequently occur that a man, having reached the age of 20 years untainted by crime, afterwards becomes an established delinquent?" The answer was, "Rarely; in very few instances, except under the pressure of peculiar circumstances, do persons of that age betake themselves, for the first time, to evil courses." It is principally in childhood, no doubt, that vicious habits are formed, and take root; and it is in childhood that we must hope for successful prevention. But to return to the expense. The expenditure of county gaols for 1846 was 147,145*l.*; of county houses of correction, 160,841*l.* The rural police cost, in 1846, in those counties which had adopted it, 180,000*l.* The metropolitan police, in 1845, cost 363,164*l.*; these, with other items, making a total of more than a million a year for the repression of crime. I do not ask for that sum towards the object I have in view; but I am sure, that if you vigorously attack the whole mass of juvenile delinquency, the mass of adult crime will speedily be reduced in a very striking proportion. There is one item of expenditure of 9,600*l.* in prosecutions for coining, which is worthy of attention; for in these cases of coining and uttering bad money, children are almost exclusively employed. I am informed that there are more children engaged in fabricating and uttering base coin in the large towns of Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool, as well as London, than in almost any other way in which the revenue is cheated, and society injured; and this sum of 9,600*l.* is nearly one half of all that I require for the removal of two-thirds of the entire mischief.

Sir, I have not in the statement that I have just made to the House, enumerated the various cities and towns where a similar condition prevails of the labouring population. Suffice it to say, that in almost every densely inhabited district, you may discover similar evils and similar consequences: the details and arguments applicable to London, are, in a great measure, applicable to Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Bath, and other large cities. In many of these towns ragged schools have been set up, and attended with the happiest results. One only I must specify, because no one, in handling the subject of these schools, may pass over the one established in Aberdeen, and the admirable exertions of Mr. Sheriff Watson. Here is a singular proof of full and unqualified success. The report for 1847 concludes:—

> "The Committee congratulate themselves and the community on the lightness of their labours. It is a remarkable fact that juvenile vagrancy has been entirely prevented, and juvenile delinquency greatly diminished, by the sole instrumentality of the schools of industry; and the Committee earnestly recommend the support of those crime-preventing institutions to the benevolence of the public. In every point of view, social, moral, and religious, they are deserving of countenance; they free the town and country of an intolerable nuisance—they increase the security of property by diminishing the number of depredators—they relieve the wants of the children of destitution—and, above all, they train these destitute ones to habits of decency and order, and inculcate that knowledge which, with the blessing of God, maketh wise unto salvation."

I do not assert that such a result is practicable in the metropolis; the surface is too large, and the population too various in its character, and shifting in its habits, to admit of equal success; but in proportion and degree the same issue will be ours. I doubt not that, if the House will take upon itself at first the moderate experiments I now recommend, it will find that, in a short time, the example will be followed by parishes, by societies, by individuals, and by private and public combinations, for the purpose of carrying into effect the same remedial measures on an extended scale. The whole that we seek may lie beyond our reach, but something at least will be speedily attained.

It will be something to have rolled back the reproach from London, that, in the midst of almost countless wealth, abundant professions and appliances of religion, with every facility, and lacking nothing but the will to benefit her children, she should have so long endured an exhibition of juvenile depravity and suffering, unexampled in the history of any State of equal importance and power. Should we fail to attain the summit of our hopes, we shall at least have wiped out the charge of indifference to such mighty duties.

It will be something to have conferred a benefit both on the colonies and the mother country, by the transplantation of thousands of children untainted by crime, nay, more, trained in the habits of industry and virtue, from places where they seemed doomed to inevitable idleness, and consequently to misery and sin—the transplantation, I say, to regions in rivalry for their labour, and abundant in assurances of reward. Thus they will bless alike the land of their birth and the land of their adoption—the boys, rescued from pernicious vagrancy, will rejoice in the fruits of honest labour; and the girls, not recovered, thank God, but saved altogether from prostitution, will walk in the happy and holy dignity of wives and mothers.

It will be something to have established a new principle of colonisation; and no longer regarding it merely as the drainage of our jails, or the outlet for the offscouring of the feeble, the mischievous, or the distressed, to hold it up as an object of ambition, the recompense of moral exertion. Governments bear the sword; they may also bear the olive branch; they are sent "for the punishment of evil-doers;" but henceforward they may obey the apostolical precept, and be "for the praise of them that do well."

It will be something that the State, violating no principle, trenching on no right, yielding to no compromise, and incurring no unseen responsibility, will appear as resolute to prevent as to chastise the commission of crime. She will anticipate the jailer and the hangman; and we, of the third and fourth generation, who are suffering justly the sins of our fathers, for we have made them our own, will, under God's blessing, take good care not to transmit them to our own posterity.

Lastly, it will be something that, leaving the higher and more ambitious speculations of commerce and politics, we have lent an open ear and a willing heart to the precepts of our common Saviour—gone into the highways and hedges, and dived into the foulest recesses of vice and misery, to rescue a host of naked, dirty, starving, and ignorant children, and drag them, in mercy, to the upper world, there, by God's grace, to thrive in the light and warmth of the everlasting gospel. This will have been your work; and God grant that you may have your reward, in the contemplation of enlarged happiness, and in the harvest of a wise, united, and understanding people! The noble Lord concluded by moving—

"That it is expedient that means be annually provided for the voluntary Emigration, to some one of Her Majesty's Colonies, of a certain number of young persons of both sexes, who have been educated in the schools ordinarily called 'Ragged Schools,' in and about the Metropolis."

Sir HARRY VERNEY seconded the Motion. He felt it unnecessary to trespass on the time of the House, after the admirable speech which they had heard from his noble Friend. Had it not been for the views expressed by the noble Lord, and to the respect which the noble Lord, and any opinions emanating from him were entitled to receive from the House, he would have preferred that the proposed remedy should not be confined to the metropolis alone, but that it should be extended at once to all the large boroughs, as well as to the rural districts.

Sir GEORGE GREY said, that it was impossible to have listened without deep interest to the statement of his noble Friend—an interest arising partly from the nature of the subject itself, and partly from the fact that his noble Friend had been enabled to lay before the House that detailed information which his indefatigable perseverance in the paths of Christian benevolence had given him so abundant an opportunity of acquiring. He had followed the statements of his noble Friend with deep attention; and he regretted to say that he was unable to controvert the statements which his noble Friend had made as to the condition of a large portion of the population in the metropolis and the other principal towns of the United Kingdom, and the state in which children were suffered to grow up belonging to parents who were removed from those ordinary influences—moral, social, and religious—which tended to humanise and Christianise the heart, and who, though living in a Christian country, were, he feared, in a state very far from approaching a position which could justly be denominated Christian. He felt how much was due to those, including some of the highest as well as the lowest—who from Christian motives and philanthropy applied their energies to investigating this state of things, and who visited the abodes of poverty and immorality with a view of rescuing the youthful population from a career of crime and misery, by the establishment, amongst other means, of ragged schools. And he agreed with his noble Friend also, that it was not merely moral and religious feelings—it was not merely the interests of the children themselves — great as these inducements were, but also the desire of promoting peace and order, and of advancing the interests of society at large, that should induce them, as far as Parliament could interfere, to endeavour to advance the objects which his noble Friend had in view. He would not weaken the force of the description of his noble Friend, by entering into any statement with regard to details that had come within his own knowledge; but he could say that they tended to confirm what his noble Friend had said. They tended to show that, however debased these youthful offenders might be, they were at that time of life peculiarly susceptible of wholesome influences; and that if those wholesome influences were exerted in their favour, there was reason to hope that, with the blessing of God, they would be attended with the best results. His noble

Friend had alluded to a visit which he had the pleasure of paying in company with him to a ragged school, not far from where they were sitting; and nothing could have been more striking than the appearance of intelligence, order, and regularity which prevailed among those attending the school. Though it was not necessarily connected with the subject now brought before the notice of the House by his noble Friend, he might allude to an institution, with the merits of which his noble Friend was, he believed, well acquainted—he meant the Philanthropic Institution, which received children that had been committed to prison for crimes. His noble Friend was familiar with the results which attended the efforts of that institution, under the direction of Mr. Turner, the excellent and energetic chaplain of it. Boys having there undergone a careful training, and having been placed in honest and industrious callings, came again to visit that institution at subsequent periods; and he did not know a more interesting object than to see these young men on these occasions listening to Mr. Turner, and showing that they still retained in their minds the good advice that had been impressed upon them some years before. He might revert to many other instances, in order to show that any care bestowed on this class of persons was not thrown away, but that it was on the contrary attended with the most satisfactory results. He believed that the ragged schools already established in this country and in Scotland were among the most valuable institutions that could be encouraged, and that they were directed to a most important object, which he hoped they were destined to achieve. His noble Friend had justly spoken of the school at Aberdeen, which owed its origin to the benevolent exertions of Mr. Sheriff Watson, as one of the first schools of this description; and its effects had been very remarkable. There were, however, peculiar facilities in Aberdeen which contributed to that success. Owing to the efficient police which they possessed under a local Act, they were enabled to put an effectual stop to vagrancy and mendicity in the streets, and one of their arrangements was, that every child found begging in the streets was taken at once by the police direct to the ragged school, instead of being brought before a magistrate. Through the exertions of the police and the assistance of the school, there was certainly a stop put to juvenile vagrancy in that town. A very interesting article in connection with this subject had appeared in one of the periodicals, which he believed had been not wrongly attributed to the pen of his noble Friend himself; and one of the most popular writers of the day—Mr. Dickens—had also published a valuable pamphlet on the subject. He need not remind his noble Friend also of the labours of Dr. Guthrie, in Edinburgh, in the same cause. But, however gratifying might be the results already attained, he thought some caution was necessary in forming expectations as to the future. He was afraid that they should not be very sanguine as to getting rid of crime by such means. Those who took an active part in these details should be content to labour on, with the feeling that good results would gradually follow from their exertions. He thought that by such means there was ground for anticipating a diminution of crime; but at the same time he feared that a greater change than any they had as yet reason to anticipate, must take place in the mass of the population, before they could prevent juvenile offenders being made the instruments of others in the accomplishment of crime. His noble Friend wished to obtain aid for the emigration of some of the children educated in these schools. To the principle he could have no objection. It had been to a certain degree acted on with regard to boys sentenced to transportation, who, after a period of confinement in Parkhurst prison, and after it was ascertained that they had profited by that discipline, and that they were likely to become good colonists, were sent abroad with conditional pardons to some of the colonies, where they would be enabled to earn a livelihood by honest industry. He could not object in principle to having them taken at a period antecedent to that when they commit crime; and that they should be assisted by the Government in being sent to the colonies, where they would be enabled to become useful members of society to their own great advantage. He had no objection to such a course being taken in cases that were selected on account of the good conduct of the children, and when it was ascertained that they had really profited by the instructions they had received, and that they were anxious to lead honest and industrious lives. Having said this much, he hoped that his noble Friend would not persist in pressing for the adoption of the resolution, as he thought it would be an unusual course to pledge the House to a grant of money to be annually provided for the purpose to which he referred, until some more detailed plan was in the first instance provided, by which they would be enabled the more clearly to see their way. He had communicated with his noble Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies on this subject, and he found him strongly impressed with the opinion that this plan might be carried out with great advantage to the colonies themselves. He would only add, that every facility would be given by the Government to carry out the plan to the extent of whatever sums might be in the hands of Government applicable to such a purpose, either from voluntary or other sources. There might, however, be other objects to which a portion of such funds should be applied, and it would, therefore, be inconvenient to be bound by a distinct pledge on the subject. He would add, that if such an object were carried out, he did not think that it should be confined to children educated in ragged schools in the metropolis. He thought that the benefit ought to be extended to the ragged schools of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and other places; but he understood his noble Friend to embrace all in the general principle. He believed that the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite (Colonel Conolly) was aware of the attention that the Government had lately bestowed in sending out young females from Ireland to Australia, and which he believed would be attended with great advantage. In conclusion, he had only to say that he should be happy to communicate with the noble Lord on this subject, and, in conjunction with his noble Friend at the head of the Colonial Department, to carry out his views so far as it should appear practicable.

Colonel CONOLLY said, it was only just towards the Government to state that their regulations for sending young females to the colonies had been received in Ireland with the greatest satisfaction.

Mr. HORSMAN did not think that the noble Lord had any reason to feel the slightest disappointment from the manner in which Her Majesty's Government seemed disposed to meet his proposition. The only difference, indeed, between the noble Lord and the right hon. Baronet was, that the resolution did not go so far as the Government themselves seemed inclined to go. He felt bound to tender his obligations to the noble Lord for making the House acquainted with a portion of our own population, of whose condition the greater portion of the House were before perfectly ignorant. He should indeed have been extremely sorry to have missed the able, earnest, and becoming speech with which the subject had been introduced. Even those who were perfectly acquainted with the extensive efforts of various benevolent societies and institutions in reclaiming our juvenile population, could scarcely have expected details showing such misery, filth, and wretchedness; such a loss of every sense of decency, morality, and hope, as appeared in so large a portion of that class of the population. Such statements ought to make us feel it a reproach that such a state of things could have existed without our being conscious of it. The noble Lord had completely established his case with regard to the condition of these schools, and the beneficial results that had attended the attempts made to reclaim this class of the population. It was something to have merely pointed out the evil; it was a great deal more to have suggested a great practical remedy for it. The noble Lord appeared to him to have begun at the right end; for whilst showing the evil to be great, he had pointed a remedy that was perfectly obvious. The advantages of it were great in a domestic point of view; in a colonial point of view the benefits of it were still greater. Having reclaimed a large population here, elevated them into a sense of their duties, and Christianised them, we were asked to send them into our own colonies, where labour was needed. Here they might, by the force of circumstances, produce misfortune and danger; but there they would become most useful members of society. In an economical point of view he agreed with the noble Lord that nothing was so expensive as crime. In this sense the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to have been the first to second the Motion. Why, the yearly expense of prosecutions for uttering base coin—a crime most frequently committed by juveniles—was actually equal to the sum which the noble Lord asked to carry out the scheme he was about to propound. It was a great recommendation of the noble Lord's suggestion, that the first labour and expense were undertaken by societies which established schools, collected the children, and then instructed them. It was only after they had been reclaimed that the State was asked to take them to our own colonies, where they would prove an inestimable blessing. And if the State once began this system, in conjunction with these institutions, he could really see no limit to the benefactions that would be received from private individuals. A few societies in connexion with the Church of England, of which he was a member, had collected sums considerably above half a million; and he was sure that if it were once felt that a scheme like this, favoured by the Government, was successful in its results, there would, in like manner, be no limit to the extent of private contributions. The greatest advantage, however, of a system of this kind was in the sympathy it exhibited towards the poorest, the most friendless, and the most neglected part of our population. Once let them feel they were not friendless nor neglected, a feeling would be established in their hearts which would be a better guarantee for the security of property and the preservation of peace, than any system of policy or legislation that could be devised. The advantages, indeed, could not be overrated; and he trusted that very speedily we should avail ourselves of them.

MR. SCOTT presumed that before long some measure would be introduced by the Government upon this important subject. A Government grant for emigration, instead of checking private enterprise, would call forth large exertions on the part of private individuals. He (Mr. Scott) had that morning waited upon the First Lord of the Treasury, by appointment, to submit to him a project for more extended emigration, with a view to relieve the great mass of suffering in this country; that project briefly was, that as of late Government had sanctioned a grant of public money for the drainage of superfluous water from land, so they should sanction a grant for draining the superfluous population off the land; the money would only be required, as in the other case, by instalments. At the opposite extremity of the world the demand for labour was exceeding the supply; and here in another part of the same empire we were suffering from just the opposite evil. The noble Lord (Lord Ashley), in referring to the Australian colonies, had understated the facts; he might have told the House that the food which would supply the thousands here suffering from want of food was wasting for want of mouths; food which would meet the destitution of this empire was boiled down for the sake of a few pounds of tallow, for want of that labour which would render it available. Our emigration had proceeded mainly to the United States rather than to those colonies where it was required; it should be assisted and directed, that it might not go to enrich foreigners, but be turned to our own colonies, where it was so greatly needed, and where our manufactures were taken to such an extent that the emigrants contributed to the support of those whom they had left behind. He had found among a number of young persons such as were to be met with in ragged schools that three-fourths of them were willing to emigrate. At the same time, the colonies could absorb all we could send; and the danger of emigration being checked was from distress and convulsion there, through panic, originating in the apprehension that by reason of the scarcity of labourers the expenses of a colonist would exceed his profits. As to this country, it would surely be better to anticipate crime; let it not be said that a person must matriculate as a felon in order to graduate as a colonist. It was to be hoped that before the Session closed a vote would be proposed to Parliament for carrying out systematic colonisation.

MR. SLANEY had heard with great pleasure the address of the noble Lord and the statement of the Home Secretary, and hoped the noble Lord would take counsel of those who were desirous to carry out the object he had in view, and not press the Motion to a division. The same evils existed in other large towns as in the metropolis, and from the same causes. In regard, for instance, to the miserable lodging-houses that he had been referred to, he (Mr. Slaney) could state, that on going with a police officer into a court in one of our large towns, the officer said, of a lodging-house in it, that he had transported all its inhabitants twice over. Yet these were samples of the practical schools in which vast numbers of children were brought up. Our labouring population, from being two to one in the rural districts, as compared with the towns, had changed to the reverse proportion during this century, and these changed circumstances required altered regulations. We had begun sanitary regulations, which ought long since to have been carried out; and he trusted this Motion would lay the foundation of other measures of improvement. The humbler classes in our large towns required social regulations for their benefit, which would not trench upon property, but make it more secure—measures for education, measures for giving them facilities for investing as as well as gaining money, so as to insure themselves by the high wages of one period against a time when they might be out of work. We had too long been playing the game of party, and occupying ourselves with schemes for increasing wealth and power, neglecting subjects of this nature, which were more important than any to the welfare, the happiness, ay, and to the safety of the country.

MR. VERNON SMITH had observed sometimes, that there was good in the collision of contending parties, and that when, as in this instance, a House of some forty-one Members sat listening to that in which all agreed, the result was the expression of acquiescence, and nothing else. Not that he doubted that the Government would pay all the attention they possibly could to the subject. But the noble Lord had made to a certain extent, a specific proposal; he (Mr. V. Smith) only wished it had been more specific. The manner in which all these proposals for emigration failed was through large systems being brought forward in great speeches, and nobody attending to the details; the noble Lord had avoided that, and proposed a most excellent measure, selecting a very fit class of objects. Although the persons sent out from Parkhurst, after being subjected to discipline there, had been received with gladness by the colonists as the most acceptable parties that had arrived, it was objectionable that we should deal with persons who had committed crime in a manner for their benefit, which we refused to the virtuous population; the noble Lord had hit upon an excellent medium, for he would take persons who might almost be called undetected criminals — persons at least with all the elements of vice about them, but happily, in many instances, not having actually committed crime, and at any rate to be sent out, when educated and improved, untainted with the reproach of those who went direct from prison and under sentence. Whilst regretting that the noble Lord did not propose a specific address for a certain sum of money, he (Mr. V. Smith) considered that there was great advantage in such Motions as this, because, if they led to nothing at the moment, they influenced eventually the minds of men in authority. Let not the noble Lord despair, for though he might not at first achieve all the success his sanguine spirit might desire, he would ultimately attain his object. The circumstance which chiefly recommended the noble Lord's proposition was the absence of any magnificent schemes for the outlay of large sums of money. His Lordship merely proposed to proceed step by step, to take what he could get this year, and as much more in the next. It was to be hoped, however, that the noble Lord would not be content with the speech of the Secretary for the Home Department, but would insist on something being done before the close of the present Session. If he might venture upon a suggestion, he would say that there should be a tripartite division of the expense, part being defrayed by the districts from which the children were taken, part by the colonies to which they might be sent, and part out of the public purse. It was essentially necessary to make provision for the superintendence of the children after their arrival in the colonies, for they would then be exposed to the severest trials.

SIR T. D. ACLAND begged to express his share of the public gratitude for the part the noble Lord had taken with reference to this question, and his confidence in the assurance of the Secretary for the Home Department that he would give his best attention to the subject.

MR. HAWES said, that the speech of the noble Member for Bath was characterised by enlarged benevolence and practical design. If the right hon. Member for Northampton had heard the speech of his right hon. Friend the Secretary for the Home Department, he could hardly have been so unjust as to cast a degree of suspicion on his motives, and on the declarations which he had made. He could assure the noble Lord that the subject had been a good deal considered since he put his notice on the Paper, and he and the noble Lord at the head of the Colonial Department, had held more than one meeting with the Emigration Commissioners with reference to it. It appeared to him that the proposition of the noble Lord was of a practical character, and capable of being carried into effect. It was undoubtedly true, that with respect to any scheme of emigration, the one thing needful was money. Give the money, and means would soon be found for spending it. He had stated on a former evening, that the Government intended to propose a vote of 10,000*l.* in the estimates this year for the purpose of promoting free emigration chiefly to the Australian colonies. He was fully impressed with the sense of the importance of sending out a well-selected and well-trained class of female emigrants. It gave him pleasure to be able to state that emigration was now going on to a great extent, and very successfully. In the course of last year nearly 270,000 persons went out from the United Kingdom as emigrants to various parts. He could not state whether the emigration this year would equal in amount that of the preceding year: but under the direction of the Emigration Commissioners ships were going out at the rate of nearly eight a month. The emigration to the Australian colonies had been singularly successful, owing to the rules laid down for its management. In consequence of the watchful superintendence exercised over the emigrants during the voyage, the mortality was reduced to the lowest amount, namely, one per cent among English emigrants. In conclusion, he recommended the noble Lord to consider and mature his plan, which already had an incipient existence, and he was not without hope that before the end of the Session Government would be able to announce that there was some prospect of sending out a small number of children.

Viscount MAHON rose for the purpose of noticing a remark made by the hon. Under Secretary for the Colonies, which was not only at variance with official records, but even with a statement made by himself a few nights ago. In a despatch, written by Earl Grey to the Lieutenant Governor of Van Diemen's Land, dated the 27th of May, his Lordship stated that the Government intended to apply to Parliament for a grant for the purpose of promoting free emigration to that colony. Upon reading that despatch, he (Viscount Mahon) asked the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hawes) what would be the amount of the grant to be proposed for the purpose alluded to in Earl Grey's despatch; and the hon. Gentleman answered 10,000*l.* Now, however, the hon. Gentleman said that the 10,000*l.* were to be expended in promoting emigration to the Australian colonies. [Mr. Hawes: I said chiefly to the Australian colonies.] But Earl Grey's despatch limited the application of the money exclusively to emigration to Van Diemen's Land. Not only so, but Earl Grey gave the reasons for such limitation. He stated that he could not approve of sending once more so many convicts to that colony, unless, at the same time, he took measures for promoting a large amount of free emigration to it. That, as Earl Grey explained at great length in the course of his despatch, was his reason—his sole reason—for proposing the intended vote of public money; and that reason would apply to no other Australian colony besides Van Diemen's Land. The same sum which would be useful if applied to one colony would become useless if frittered away among many. At least it was desirable that the Government should state distinctly what their intention was.

Mr. HAWES explained that he did not confine his answer to Van Diemen's Land on a former occasion. The Government meant to apply the 10,000*l.* to the promotion of emigration to the Australian colonies as well as Van Diemen's Land.

Sir E. N. BUXTON, after complimenting the noble Lord the Member for Bath for the able statement he had made, said it was impossible for any man to hold the situation he (Sir E. N. Buxton) had done for many years as treasurer to the London City Mission Society without being well aware of the truth of the statement of his noble Friend, and of the great necessity that existed for the attention of Parliament and the country being diligently and immediately devoted to the condition of that large portion of the population on whose behalf his noble Friend had so long and so meritoriously exerted his best energies. In stating the number of children at 30,000, he thought his noble Friend had rather under estimated their numbers. But his object in rising was to point out to the notice of the House a portion of the population of a different character to that to which his noble Friend's Motion more immediately applied. He had long been acquainted with the condition of the children of persons who were perhaps as poor as the parents of those that were sent to ragged schools, but who were of a more respectable character, and who, notwithstanding their poverty, strived to give their children some degree of education—he alluded more particularly to the neighbourhood of Spitalfields, where there existed schools, towards the expense of which the parents of the children themselves contributed. At one of those schools, with which he was himself connected, the amount received, in 1843 from the parents of the children was 347*l.*; and in the years 1846 and 1847 the amount received was 370*l.* A large proportion of the pupils were the children of persons as poor as those whose children were educated at the ragged schools. The total number of the pupils was 392, 132 of whom were the children of weavers, 186 the children of other artisans, and the remainder were the children of persons of sundry occupations. This showed that there were parents who, though struggling with poverty as great as that of any class of Her Majesty's subjects, nevertheless were earnestly desirous, in the midst of their privations, to give their children a good education. Therefore, while cordially approving of the plan of his noble Friend, he considered it was desirable that they should not give a premium to that class of the population who wholly neglected their children, but that they should extend the benefit of any scheme of emigration that might be adopted to those more meritorious parents who were striving in the midst of difficulties to assist themselves.

Mr. MONCKTON MILNES expressed his earnest opinion that a more solemn and important question than the one now under discussion had never been brought before the House. From the thin attendance of hon. Members, it was obvious how small was the consideration brought to bear upon the subject. Highly as he valued the exertions of the noble Lord, yet there was evidently somewhere or other an apathy that must be surmounted, and difficulties that must be overcome, which nothing but a zeal and an enthusiasm equal to that which animated the noble Lord's own breast could achieve. It was impossible to hear the speech of his noble Friend without arriving at the conviction that the facts he had described constituted the main evils that lay at the very bottom of society. To that statement no effective answer had been given. It was not sufficient for the Government to state that they were ready to do their best by the ordinary means and processes that were at their command. The noble Lord had shown that there lay at the bottom of society evils which not only tainted every class of the community, but which entailed, both locally and generally, an enormous expense upon the country. Even in a financial point of view some peculiar effort was necessary to remedy those evils; but much more was required. Unless some extraordinary effort was made, he was apprehensive that the crowded population which was now growing up would be fraught with vast mischief to the country. The education which they were now in a certain degree compelled to impart to the people, would only increase the evil, if by their exertions they did not make it an instrument of good. They could not prevent those classes deriving something from the education which was given to them; and he warned the House that that very education would be the means of creating a most dangerous element in the great spirit of democracy which was growing up in England, and which would join its sympathies with the democracies of Europe. It was, therefore, of vital importance that the Legislature should endeavour to infuse a patriotic spirit into the minds of the people, so that they might feel a generous interest in the future affairs and destiny of this country. He could not but look with the greatest terror at the dreary prospect that society at present afforded to those poor children for whose behoof these ragged schools were established. When he considered that, educated as now they were, without any moral or religious elements operating upon their minds or hearts—when he contemplated them growing up in the midst of a Christian land as mere heathens without heathen gods—he could not look forward without terror and apprehension at the vast injury they might inflict upon the English community. He therefore implored Her Majesty's Government to take this question not only into their peculiar consideration, but to view and pursue it in all its magnitude and importance. Let them not be content to treat it with civil words and complimentary phrases, but let them feel that they have a right to demand from the people of this country great and important sacrifices. If they treated it with earnestness, he doubted not that the people would cheerfully second their exertions; but if they treated it only in a merely formal and official manner, they would not meet with public support. Hitherto what had the Government done towards ameliorating the condition of the poor? There was a Board of Commissioners, at the head of which was the noble Lord the Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests. Under the auspices of that board grand streets had been formed, and pompous buildings erected for wealthy shops, but no provision was made to improve the dwellings or bring comfort to the hearths of the wretched beings who haunted the cellars and garrets of the close-pent courts and alleys of this metropolis. There had been no initiation by the Government for any one of the great charitable schemes that existed in this country. The public baths and washhouses were the result of mere accident, as was also the finding of one Member of the aristocracy devoting his energies to the promotion of such schemes. It was only a chance that they now had two or three model lodging-houses erected in this city—a work which ought long ago to have occupied the mind of a paternal Government. He foresaw great dangers coming upon this country, and which could only be averted by the earnest and hearty efforts of the Government in effecting great moral and social reforms amongst the vast population that was rising up around them. They could not always expect to find such men as the noble Lord. They had a right, therefore, to call upon the Government to look upon this question in its totality and in its extreme importance, and to be ready to demand of the country those sacrifices which the magnitude and gravity of the case required.

MR. ADDERLEY could assure the House that a strong feeling was entertained in the country with regard to the importance of such measures as had been recommended by the noble Lord the Member for Bath. The workmen themselves, on whose behalf the noble Lord had appealed to the Government, felt the importance of instituting, by some means, a system of emigration. In the county in which he (Mr. Adderley) resided, Staffordshire, associations with this object had been formed by the potter workmen. Some time since associations were established for the purpose of organising strikes for wages; but the objects of these associations had been changed, and a system had been adopted by the workmen for assisting one another to emigrate to other countries. At present, however, this system of emigration was conducted in a very unsatisfactory manner; the persons who emigrated were exposed to every species of fraud; and unless the Government came forward to afford them aid and information in carrying out their views, he feared that these people would be thrown back upon the Chartist agitation to which they had in the first instance resorted. He believed, if this question was not immediately taken up by the Government, it would be taken up, though in a less efficient manner, by the very paupers.

MR. WESTHEAD had a few days back received a letter, dated December, 1847, from Adelaide, South Australia, the writer of which stated that there was a great want of labourers in the colony, and that the farmers were paying 13*s*. or 14*s*. an acre for reaping, finding the labourers board and lodging, the very best food, and a bottle of wine a day worth 1*s*. He had received another letter, which stated that the constant complaint in the colony was want of labour; that ship after ship arrived with emigrants, and an idler was never seen after the first week of their arrival; and that if the Government put a stop to emigration the settlers had better come home at once.

LORD ASHLEY, in reply, observed that the House seemed to think that he had acted exclusively when he proposed only to include the metropolis—it was through extreme caution. His object was to make an experiment, and supposing that experiment had succeeded, no doubt it would be extended. His object was to get in the thin edge of the wedge, and then it was his intention to drive it well up to the head. The Government and many hon. Gentlemen had come forward in so generous a manner to support the proposition, that he thought that if he attempted to divide the House, he should only take a hostile course, and convert into enemies many who would otherwise be coadjutors; he would, therefore, with the permission of the House, withdraw his Motion; but, at the same time, he would watch the Government with jealous care, and take the liberty, both in and out of the House, to jog their memories.

Motion withdrawn.

House adjourned at a quarter before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, June 7, 1848.

MINUTES.] PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Muntz, Mr. W. J. Fox, and other Hon. Members, from an Immense Number of Places, in favour of an Extension of the Elective Franchise.—By Mr. Brotherton, and other Hon. Members, from several Places, for Better Observance of the Lord's Day.—By Mr. Bouverie, from Ayrshire, and other Hon. Members, from several Places, in favour of the Places of Worship Sites (Scotland) Bill.—By Mr. Scott, from several Woollen Manufacturers, resident in Great Britain, for Promotion of Colonisation (Australia).—By Mr. Ewart, from Van Diemen's Land, for Abolition of Transportation to that Colony.—By Mr. Bouverie, from Members of the Leighton Buzzard Temperance Society, against the Use of Grain in Breweries and Distilleries.—By Mr. Cardwell, from Liverpool, for Retrenchment of the Expenditure.—By Mr. Cumming Bruce, for a Revision of Stamp Duties.—By Mr. Cowan, from Operative Bakers of Edinburgh, Leith, and several other Places, for Inquiry into their Grievances.—By Mr. M. Wilson, from several Lodges of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, for an Extension of the Benefit Societies Act.—By Mr. George Hamilton, from the Diocese of Clogher, against the Diplomatic Relations, Court of Rome, Bill.—By Mr. W. J. Fox, from Inhabitants of Littleborough (Lancaster), in favour of Secular Education.—By Mr. Brotherton, from Bannockburn, for a Repeal of the Game Laws.—By Mr. Bouverie, from the Town Council of Renfrew, in favour of the Law of Entail

(Scotland) Bill.—By the Earl of Lincoln, from Lanark, against the Lunatic Asylums (Scotland) Bill.—From several Working People, Mile End New Town, in favour of the Public Health Bill.—By Mr. Home Drummond, from the Presbytery of Perth, against the Schoolmasters (Scotland) Bill.—By Mr. G. Hamilton, from the Royal Irish Academy, for an Alteration of the Scientific Societies Bill.

MR. MITCHEL.

Sir W. VERNER wished to ask the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he had heard, and if so, whether the report was true, that John Mitchel, when put on board the *Shearwater* steamer to be conveyed to Spike Island, was entertained by the officers of that ship—that he was placed at their table, took part of their mess, and was treated by them, not as a convicted felon, but as a passenger.

Sir G. GREY knew only that Mitchel was placed on board the *Shearwater* by direction of the Lord Lieutenant. A report had certainly reached him that an officer on board the *Shearwater* invited Mitchel to breakfast on the morning the vessel was on her passage; but he had been informed most distinctly that the officer who had acted so was not the commanding officer, but the assistant surgeon of the ship. He had called the attention of the First Lord of the Admiralty to the statement.

GAME CERTIFICATES FOR KILLING HARES BILL.

On the further consideration of the Report,

Mr. COLVILE intended to propose an amendment in the first clause, with the view of raising the question as to retaining the fourth clause, which imposed certain restrictions as to the mode of killing hares. The hon. Member proposed that the words be left out "by any means save as hereinafter excepted."

The House divided on the question that the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Bill:—Ayes 22; Noes 77: Majority 55.

List of the AYES.

Arkwright, G.
Brackley, Visct.
Bremridge, R.
Broadley, H.
Brotherton, J.
Buck, L. W.
Crawford, W. S.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Farnham, E. B.
Ferguson, Sir R. A.
Fox, W. J.
Fuller, A. E.
Gwyn, H.
Hildyard, R. C.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Mulgrave, Earl of
Sibthorp, Col.
Smyth, J. G.
Thornhill, G.
Waddington, H. S.
Willoughby, Sir H.

TELLERS.
Berkeley, hon. F. G.
Berkeley, hon. F. H.

List of the NOES.

Armstrong, Sir A.
Armstrong, R. B.
Barrington, Visct.
Benbow, J.
Bennet, P.
Birch, Sir T. B.
Bouverie, hon. E. P.
Brown, W.
Bruce, C. L. C.
Carew, W. H. P.
Christopher, R. A.
Clive, H. B.
Cochrane, A. D.R.W.B.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Cowan, C.
Cubitt, W.
Davie, Sir H. R. F.
Dawson, hon. T. V.
Divett, E.
Drummond, H. H.
Duncan, G.
Ebrington, Visct.
Egerton, W. T.
Ellice, E.
Elliot, hon. J. E.
Evans, W.
Ewart, W.
Fergus, J.
Floyer, J.
Fortescue, hon. J. W.
French, F.
Frewen, C. H.
Grenfell, C. W.
Haggitt, F. R.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Hardcastle, J. A.
Harris, hon. Capt.
Hastie, A.
Headlam, T. E.
Heywood, J.
Hodges, T. L.
Hope, Sir J.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Kershaw, J.
King, hon. P. J. L.
Lewis, G. C.
Mackenzie, W. F.
M'Taggart, Sir J.
Maitland, T.
Matheson, J.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Melgund, Visct.
Monsell, W.
Morgan, H. K. G.
O'Brien, J.
Ogle, S. C. H.
Oswald, A.
Packe, C. W.
Patten, J. W.
Pilkington, J.
Pusey, P.
Rawdon, Col.
Rutherfurd, A.
Sidney, Ald.
Simeon, J.
Somerville,rt.hon.SirW.
Spooner, R.
Stafford, A.
Stanton, W. H.
Thicknesse, R. A.
Thompson, Col.
Thornely, T.
Tollemache, J.
Trollope, Sir J.
Wilson, M.
Wrightson, W. B.
Wyvill, M.

TELLERS.
Colvile, C. R.
Seymer, H. K.

Sir WILLIAM JOLLIFFE moved that, after the word "description," in line 40, Clause 4, the words "by night" be added. His object was to give an opportunity to farmers to kill rabbits in the day-time by a gun, and thus to legalise the use of guns in the day-time. Hares might be very easily destroyed in moonlight nights; and he believed that the adoption of his proposition would tend to their preservation, as the farmers, when they possessed the right of shooting by day, would be inclined to aid the landlords in preventing poaching by night.

The House divided on the question that the words be added:—Ayes 78; Noes 18: Majority 60.

List of the AYES.

Armstrong, R. B.
Barrington, Visct.
Benbow, J.
Bennet, P.
Bouverie, hon. E. P.
Brackley, Visct.
Brown, W.
Carew, W. H. P.

Carter, J. B.
Charteris, hon. F.
Clive, H. B.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Crawford, W. S.
Cubitt, W.
Dalrymple, Capt.
Dawson, hon. T. V.
Drumlanrig, Visct.
Drummond, H. H.
Duncan, G.
Dundas, G.
Elliot, hon. J. E.
Estcourt, J. B. B.
Evans, W.
Ewart, W.
Floyer, J.
Fox, W. J.
Freestun, Col.
French, F.
Frewen, C. H.
Fuller, A. E.
Gladstone, rt. hn. W. E.
Greene, T.
Haggitt, F. R.
Hardcastle, J. A.
Harris, hon. Capt.
Heneage, G. H. W.
Heywood, J.
Hodges, T. L.
Hope, Sir J.
Kershaw, J.
King, hon. P. J. L.
Lewis, G. C.
Lygon, hon. Gen.
Mackenzie, W. F.
M'Taggart, Sir J.
Maitland, T.
Matheson, J.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Melgund, Visct.
Monsell, W.
Morgan, H. K. G.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Ogle, S. C. H.
Oswald, A.
Packe, C. W.
Pakington, Sir J.
Patten, J. W.
Pechell, Capt.
Pilkington, J.
Pusey, P.
Ricardo, O.
Russell, hon. E. S.
Rutherfurd, A.
Seymer, H. K.
Sidney, Ald.
Simeon, J.
Smollett, A.
Spooner, R.
Stafford, A.
Stanton, W. H.
Stuart, Lord J.
Thicknesse, R. A.
Thompson, Col.
Wilson, M.
Wodehouse, E.
Wrightson, W. B.
Wyvill, M.
Young, Sir J.

TELLERS.
Jolliffe, Sir W.
Colvile, C. R.

List of the NOES.

Arkwright, G.
Armstrong, Sir A.
Broadley, H.
Buck, L. W.
Christopher, R. A.
Cochrane, A. D. R. W. B.
Coles, H. B.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Ellice, E.
Fergus, J.
Hildyard, R. C.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Repton, G. W. J.
Sibthorp, Col.
Thornhill, G.
Waddington, H. S.
Willoughby, Sir H.

TELLERS.
Berkeley, hon G. F.
Mulgrave, Earl of

On the question that the Bill be engrossed,

Mr. DRUMMOND rose to oppose the Motion. A great deal had been said by hon. Members as to the modes in which hares might be killed. Some had spoken of killing them by snares. Some had spoken of killing them by guns. He wondered that no one had risen to point out the mode of putting salt on their tails. There was most certainly one interest, and one class not represented in that House; for much had been said against them, and nothing had been said in their favour—he meant the poachers. He had heard hon. Members also talk of the demoralisation of the system. He did not understand that. The poacher, in his opinion, was just a poor sportsman. If a sportsman had 10,000*l.*, he went to Leicestershire and kept a pack of hounds. The young sportsman went to Leicestershire because he knew that there he would get the best foxhunting. When he became a little older he put up with hares; and at last he dwindled down to rabbits. Now, the poacher, he repeated, was nothing else but a poor statesman. Wherever there was a pack of hounds, he went with them as much for the love of sport as for anything else. There was another class, he admitted, who went out determined to shoot everything — not only pheasants, which were foolish enough to cry out and let them know where they were, but also sheep and poultry. That class of persons, he knew, were mixed up with poachers; but they were a different class. Now, as to the demoralisation of sporting, he begged to say that there were a great many noblemen and gentlemen in that House who spent a great deal of time in foxhunting, instead of attending to the business of legislation; and he could not see but that this system was as demoralising for them as for others. What he wanted to do was, to amend very slightly the Little Trespass Act, and then to get rid of the game laws altogether. They were iniquitous in their original establishment—they were an act of tyranny which he should be glad to see entirely removed; and he must say he thought it was discreditable to the House, instead of employing themselves in doing that, to waste a whole day on a paltry question of this kind.

Colonel SIBTHORP could not agree with the hon. Member, that the game laws should be abolished altogether; but, objecting as he did to the Bill then before the House, he would be prepared to oppose it on the third reading.

Mr. W. S. CRAWFORD agreed with the hon. Member for West Surrey in opposing this Bill altogether. He regarded this Bill as a practical delusion. It professed to relieve farmers from the influence of the game laws; whereas in reality it gave them no satisfaction whatever. He considered that no real good would be done without the entire abrogation of the game laws.

Mr. ELLIOT could not agree with the hon. Member who had just sat down, that the Bill would do no good. It would relieve small proprietors, whose estates were in the neighbourhood of game-preserving landowners; and it would also protect the tenants of other parties who were not game preservers. The present Bill would benefit small proprietors, who had no power at present of avoiding the mischief done to their property, and who, at the same time, had no compensation awarded to them for the property destroyed.

Mr. G. BERKELEY begged to say, that there was a great deal of false sympathy with poachers. It had been proved, before a Committee on this subject, that there was scarcely a crime of which they were not guilty. If they abolished the game laws, they must have a Trespass Act, which would be ten times more stringent and ten times more unpopular than the game laws.

The House divided on the question that the Bill be engrossed:—Ayes 90; Noes 11:—Majority 79.

List of the Ayes.

Anstey, T. C.
Armstrong, Sir A.
Armstrong, R. B.
Bagshaw, J.
Barrington, Visct.
Benbow, J.
Bennet, P.
Berkeley, hon. G. F.
Blackall, S. W.
Bouverie, hon. E. P.
Brackley, Visct.
Brown, W.
Carew, W. H. P.
Carter, J. B.
Charteris, hon. F.
Clay, J.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.
Clive, H. B.
Cobbold, J. C.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Cowan, C.
Cubitt, W.
Dalrymple, Capt.
Dawson, hon. T. V.
Drummond, H. H.
Duncan, G.
Dundas, G.
Dunne, F. P.
Ellice, rt. hon. E.
Ellice, E.
Elliot, hon. J. E.
Estcourt, J. B. B.
Evans, W.
Ewart, W.
Fergus, J.
Floyer, J.
Foley, J. H. H.
Forbes, W.
Fox, W. J.
Freestun, Col.
Frewen, C. H.
Gladstone, rt. hon. W. E.
Greene, T.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Haggitt, F. R.
Hardcastle, J. A.
Harris, hon. Capt.
Heneage, G. H. W.
Heywood, J.
Hodges, T. L.
Hope, Sir J.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Kershaw, J.
King, hon. P. J. L.
Langston, J. H.
Mackenzie, W. F.
M'Taggart, Sir J.
Maitland, T.
Matheson, J.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Morgan, H. K. G.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Mulgrave, Earl of
Mure, Col.
Ogle, S. C. H.
Oswald, A.
Pakington, Sir J.
Patten, J. W.
Pechell, Capt.
Pilkington, J.
Pusey, P.
Rawdon, Col.
Ricardo, O.
Russell, hon. E. S.
Rutherfurd, A.
Sheridan, R. B.
Sidney, Ald.
Smollett, A.
Spooner, R.
Stanton, W. H.
Stuart, Lord J.
Talfourd, Serj.
Thicknesse, R. A.
Thompson, Col.
Thornely, T.
Willoughby, Sir H.
Wilson, M.
Wodehouse, E.
Wrightson, W. B.
Wyvill, M.

TELLERS.
Colvile, C. R.
Stafford, A.

List of the Noes.

Buck, L. W.
Coles, H. B.
Crawford, W. S.
Drumlanrig, Visct.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Du Pre, C. G.
Fuller, A. E.
Gwyn, H.
Hildyard, R. C.
Thornhill, G.
Waddington, H. S.

TELLERS.
Cochrane, A. D. R. W. B.
Drummond, H.

Bill to be engrossed.

PLACES OF WORSHIP (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On the Motion that the Speaker do now leave the chair for the House to go into Committee on the Places of Worship (Scotland) Bill,

Mr. B. COCHRANE felt, notwithstanding he was intimately connected with Scotland, that, representing as he did an English constituency, he ought to make some apology to the Members for Scotland for opposing this measure. He made that apology by quoting the words of Swift, "When the house is in danger of being robbed, the weakest of the family runs to stop the door." He, however, must add, that he felt imperatively called upon to take this step, for when this important subject was discussed the other day, no person made any objection to a measure which, he was sure, if they knew its true meaning and tendency, they would have opposed as strongly as he did. He thought, in a question of so much importance, it was essential to the proper consideration of the question, that the House, and particularly those hon. Members who had not paid much attention to the subject, should know what were the principles and opinions of those persons who demanded sites for their meeting-houses in Scotland. Members of the House, it might be, were not aware of the origin of the Free Kirk movement. Did they know that it only commenced in 1834, and that up to that time the question had created no interest since the reign of Queen Anne, when the law respecting the patronage of the Scottish Church was settled? The House could not, however, be unaware that the Free Kirk of Scotland went first into the courts of law, and were beaten in the Auchterarder case; that they then appealed to the House of Lords, and that their Lordships also rejected their appeal. They admitted the jurisdiction of the courts by appealing to them; but when they were beaten, then the Free Kirk men turned round and said, "We will separate ourselves; we will secede from the Established Church." Had it been on a question of doctrine, he could have understood it; he could have respected a question of doctrine or of faith, but this was a question only of patronage. Dr. Candlish and Dr. Chalmers wanted to take the whole of the patronage into their own hands, and that was the secret of the whole movement. But he hoped the House would remember that these gentlemen, having gained by the patronage system — having accepted that patronage themselves — turned round and used the power it had given them to injure those who had benefited them. But what was the number that seceded? Admitting that the question was one which ought to have been discussed in the General Assembly, which he doubted, the number of seceders was only 294, not more than one-third of the whole members of the Assembly. Let them also consider what were the number of sites that had been refused. The whole number was 29, while upwards of 600 had been granted to them. So far from having any ground of complaint, in a pastoral address, issued in 1846, it was said—

> "We desire to acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude that the opposition to our cause has given way in many instances, in proportion as it was made manifest to all that the aim of the Free Church was directed not to the one third of any temporal establishment, but to the maintenance and extension of the spiritual kingdom of Christ; and we hope that these symptoms of growing liberality and kindness will be duly appreciated by all our people."

In 1846 they said that, and in 1848 the right hon. Gentleman who presided over the Committee which sat in 1847 brought in this Bill to compel the proprietors to give sites. If this separation from the Church was a matter of faith, the case would be entirely different; but the real object of the move was to overthrow the Established Church of Scotland. In the report of the Committee over which the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Fox Maule) presided, there was not one word which suggested the propriety of introducing such a Bill. It certainly did say that proprietors should grant sites, as a means of preserving good feeling among all parties, but it said not a word about a Bill to make them. That, however, afforded no grounds for this Bill; and, while speaking of that report, he must complain of the misrepresentations it contained with respect to the Duke of Richmond. It held that excellent nobleman up to public odium for having refused sites; the positive fact at the same time being that his Grace had offered these people sites, and that they had refused them; and now the House of Commons was called on to say, by this Bill, that they shall be authorised by Act of Parliament to take possession of any ground they choose to select. He should like the House to know what the Free Kirk really was. Did hon. Members know that it had been associated with every republican movement that had taken place in Scotland since its baleful and strife-creating advent? If this was doubted, let hon. Members refer to the evidence given before the Committee; and he would also quote, in proof of this assertion, from a last week's paper, published under the authority of the Free Kirk, an article appearing in their organ, the *Witness*. The hon. Member read the following passage:—

> "Who are revolutionists? We would seriously warn the Duke of Buccleuch that intolerance like his, so associated with dastardly meanness, is of more revolutionary tendency than all the pike and powder speeches of Chartist orators. We would warn our aristocracy that they are creating the very dangers which they dread. If consciences are enthralled or debauched, mankind are debased and corrupted. It is to this that the labours of not a few lords and lairds are now tending. And what would be the result of their complete success? What but the outbreaking of this corruption—a foul flood, but mighty enough to sweep them and their coronets and their castles away. Would they be safe with serfs? Let them remember the recent stories of the nobles of Gallicia. And let them read again the history of the "reign of terror," and ponder the social and internal history of France for the previous century."

Had there ever been anything published, even in Ireland, under the auspices of Mr. Mitchel or Mr. Meagher, more mischievous, more republican, or more outrageous than that extract? He believed not, and he thought the House would agree with that opinion. Here, however, was another extract from the *Witness*:—

> "In every case let the person and property of the hireling be sacred; whether he occupy the pulpit of Dr. M'Donald of Urquhart, or of Dr. Burns of Kilsyth, of Mr. M'Leod of Snizort, or of Mr. Stewart of Cromarty, let his person be as sacred as if the Court of Session had presented to the charge one of its red-nosed macers, or as if he were not the Erastian parson, but the constable, or sheriff officer, or thief-catcher of the district. But to his safety and his property let this sense of sacredness be restricted; let it on no occasion be forgotten that he is the person on whose behalf the proprietor is flagrantly oppressive and unjust."

And these are the men who come to ask us to force the gentlemen of whom they so speak to give them sites.

> "Let him be regarded as virtually the one excommunicated man of the district—the man with whom no one is to join in prayer—whose church is to be avoided as an impure and unholy place—whose addresses are not to be listened to—whose visits are not to be received—who is to be everywhere put under the ban of the community; and until the proprietor raises the siege of the Free Church on his part, let it be held imperative by the people that the siege of the residuary clergyman and the residuary church be kept up on theirs. There is to be a contest of wills in this matter; and there is standing equally legal for both the antagonist parties engaged in it. But while the people have justice as well as law on their side, our hostile proprietary have law only; and so, if the Scottish character has not lost its old characteristic firmness, if our Whiggism of the old school be still the old dour Whiggism—the Whiggism that has been rarely broken, and never once bent, the better cause in the end must infallibly prevail."

[Mr. F. MAULE: When was that written?] In 1847; I have not the date; but it is admitted in the evidence from which I take the extract to be from their own paper, the *Witness*. [Mr. F. MAULE: The *Witness* is not the organ of the Free Kirk.] If the right hon. Gentleman really means to assert that, all I have said falls to the ground. [Mr. F. MAULE: I say that most distinctly.] This is certainly a new light thrown upon the subject. It is received as the organ of the Free Kirk party; it is always thought so; and the *Witness* represents itself to be the organ. [Mr. DRUMMOND here put a copy of the *Witness* into the hands of Mr. B. Cochrane, and pointed out a passage on the subject, which the hon. Gentleman read. It was a portion of a letter addressed to the editor as the organ of the party, in express terms, an honour not declined in any way or shape. The hon. Member then proceeded.] In order to show the mild and Christian spirit of the leaders of the Free Kirk move, he would quote a speech delivered by Dr. Chalmers himself. He was reported, in the evidence taken before the Committee, to have been asked if he still held his opinions with respect to the "deep guilt" of those who adhered to the Establishment? He replied that he did, and then he said as follows:—

> "Even though, through our keeping by this principle, and proclaiming it everywhere, the Scottish Establishment, now the stronghold of that Erastianism which has driven us from its bowers, should be laid prostrate in the dust, and along with it the subsistence of all its dependent families; surely you cannot expect that the principle which we could not give up for the sake of our own livings, we must now give up and cease to act upon for the sake of the livings of other people. This were truly the ultraism of being righteous overmuch. It were not only loving our neighbours as ourselves, but loving them a great deal better than ourselves."

Let them hear Dr. Chalmers again, and mark the tone he assumed in talking of that Establishment of which he had been all his life a member:—

> "You say (was the question) that a restoration is possible? Yes; but if I were to state the process, it would appear, I fear, so extravagant, that I have not the slightest hope of its being at present brought about. We must, of course, provide for the perfect integrity of our own ecclesiastical principles; and I do not see how that can be done, except by the Legislature adopting the Free Church as the Establishment, and then leaving us to deal with the ministers of the Established Church as so many ecclesiastical delinquents, who have forsaken their original principles. I dare say that we should be very mild and indulgent in dealing with them, so far as was consistent with our principles. I state this in answer to your question; but at the same time I have not the slightest hope that it is a measure which will soon be carried out; though we would certainly treat those ministers in a way that would be attended with less severity upon them personally than our sufferings have amounted to. If there was such a resolution of the Legislature come to, I would venture to say that there should be no such thing as an instant deprivation of the emoluments of office of any individual, but they should be left to die out; and when a parish was vacant, it should be filled up by a licentiate of the Free Church; and in that way there would be a substitution of a church with its original principles for a church with its altered principles. That of itself, however, would not, I think, satisfy the Free Church now."

What a beautiful specimen of Free Kirk moderation! He was sorry to trouble the House; but he was anxious to lay before them his grounds for believing, which he most honestly did, that the aim of the Free Kirk move was to overthrow the Establishment. This design appeared distinctly in the following answers given by several parties to Sir James Graham, when they were examined before the Committee. Dr. Candlish is reported to have said this:—

> "The same view of duty which led us to leave it (the Establishment) will also of course lead us to aim at the overthrow of the Establishment that remains. Do you think it your duty to maintain, or if by lawful means you can, to subvert, what you consider the Erastian Establishment?—I do not precisely know what is meant by lawful means. We feel that our position is one of submission to the authority which we respect, to revere the civil authority in this country, and we would not do anything against the Established Church that is not consistent with the laws of the country as they stand. We would do nothing of that kind; we entertain a high sense of the respect that is due to lawful authority as an appointment of God, and therefore we would refrain from anything upon which that construction

could fairly be put. But, on the other hand, if we could, by our prayers or our preaching, or our diligent and faithful spiritual services, lead all the people of Scotland to right apprehensions of what we consider to be the truth of God, we would certainly aim at that, and exert ourselves for that purpose. You would use every effort, in any parish where you were placed, to draw the inhabitants of the parish, the members of the Established Church, to the creed which you believe to be the right one ?—Yes; but it would be through a knowledge of Christ."

There they plainly and distinctly avow their object and intention of overthrowing the Establishment; and now we are asked (continued the hon. Gentleman) to pass a measure which is to compel proprietors, however conscientiously differing from the opinions advocated by the Free Church party, to give sites for churches where a system of religion would be preached of which they disapprove, leading to dissent, to misery, and to wretchedness. I do not see that they have great cause to complain, when they feel strong in this secession. I sincerely trust, that after the observations I have made, the House will throw out this measure. I regret exceedingly that the right hon. Baronet at the head of Her Majesty's late Government is not now in his place to address the House on this subject, as nothing could be stronger than the language he employed in speaking upon it in 1843:—

> "If the House of Commons is prepared to depart from those principles upon which the Reformation is founded, and which principles are essential to the maintenance of the civil and religious liberties of this country—whether it proceeds from the Church of Rome or from the Presbyterian Church of Scotland—nothing but evil would result; the greatest evil of which would be, the establishment of religious domination, endangering the religion of the country and the civil rights of man."

The right hon. Gentleman opposite shook his head when the principles of civil and religious liberty were spoken of; but I maintain that the movement of the Free Church of Scotland commenced with the Reform Bill. It was a Radical movement from the beginning; and I would only refer to the acts committed in the north of Scotland, and to the arrogant conduct manifested towards those who did not yield at once. It is on these grounds that I hoped the House would throw out the Bill; and I cannot conceive—according to their own statement, and the pastoral address which they issued, and in which they admitted that they had been treated with kindness—I cannot conceive how, because a few sites are refused to them, they can come forward and think that a measure is to be introduced to compel a proprietor, whatever may be his conscientious conviction on the subject, to give them a site. In the evidence of the Committee appointed to examine into this subject, there was a letter from Sir James Riddle, containing a beautiful passage supporting this view of the question; the letter having been written in answer to an application made to him for a site. Concurring fully in those sentiments, I shall deem it my duty to oppose a Bill setting at defiance the law and the courts of law of Scotland. Truly has it been said that—

> "The Puritan and Presbyterian seed
> Vie with hot haste to make religion bleed,
> To ruin Prelacy, their only creed:
> But since they from the Lord are so disjointed,
> Not to respect the edicts he appointed,
> How can they reverence the Lord's anointed ?"

And this, I think, has been said in terms severe enough to reprobate the conduct of the Free Kirk, for the manner in which it has pressed its claims, and for the language which its adherents have used on every public occasion, calculated to spread misery and dissension among the heretofore happy parishes of Scotland. The hon. Gentleman concluded by moving, as an Amendment, that the Bill be committed that day six months.

MR. FOX MAULE had entertained great hopes when this question was introduced to the House on three former occasions, that they would have discussed it free from all those feelings of party hostility which, though they once embittered the subject, he trusted were then fast passing away, and would never again be touched on in that House. It was not his intention to follow the hon. Member through all the subjects of recrimination which he had alluded to; but he must be permitted to point out how truly ignorant he was of all the grounds on which this question rested, and of the facts which had led to, and were connected with, the secession of which he had said so much. No man lamented those proceedings more than he did; but no man would more firmly maintain that those who had separated from the Established Church of Scotland, did so because they had no other course to pursue if they meant to maintain faithfully the principles which they deemed to be right. With regard to the numbers that had seceded at the time of the first secession, they had been computed by the hon. Member at 292, whereas they were in point of fact, 472. Allusion had been made by the hon. Member to the disaffection to the laws and institutions of the country which was alleged to exist amongst the clergy and laity of the Free Church; but the hon. Member was never more mistaken in his life than when he asserted that the men who composed that Church were connected, however remotely, with any disorderly or disloyal movement. There was not a body of men in the empire who were better disposed towards the laws, nor was there any which was more anxious to disseminate religious principles throughout the land than those who composed the Free Church of Scotland. The hon. Member would have it supposed that they were disaffected towards the laws, because they could not make their conscientious convictions conform to a decision of the House of Lords. He (Mr. F. Maule) could see no great harm on their part, or on that of any other class of loyal men, in disputing the decision even of so high a tribunal as the House of Lords. It would be borne in mind, that although the decision of that august tribunal—in the case of the Free Church—stood as the decision of the law, and was practically respected as such, some of the highest legal authorities in the courts of Scotland were to this day of opinion that the view taken of the question at issue was the correct one. But as the law of the land had decided to the contrary, the members of the Free Church had succumbed unmurmuringly to the decision of the last court of appeal in this country; and, maintaining their principles, hesitated not to resign the stipends, manses, and glebes which they had enjoyed as members of the Established Church. He would not follow the hon. Member through all the quotations he had made from the evidence that was adduced before the Committee. The hon. Member had alluded to the *Witness* newspaper, and had spoken of that journal as though it were the authorised and accredited organ of the Free Church party—but such was not the fact. During the sittings of the Committee the question was asked over and over again, whether that paper was or was not the organ of the Free Church? and again and again it was answered in the negative. The fact was, that that body had no authorised organ whatever. It was very true that the paper in question was edited by a member of the Free Church, and it was also true that it presented to the public more diffusely and more accurately than other papers what occurred at the meetings and assemblies of the Free Church; but it was equally incontestable that it was not the legitimate and accredited organ of that body. Many articles had appeared in it which were condemned by the Free Church, and which had done injury to it; and recently some articles had appeared in it with reference to his noble Friend the Duke of Buccleuch, which he, for one, was very sorry to have seen published in it; and which, so far from having any authority from the Free Church, had been repudiated by the assembly. The hon. Member had spoken slightingly of the mighty dead. He had talked flippantly of the evidence given by that great man, and had endeavoured to misrepresent it. [Mr. B. COCHRANE had done nothing of the kind.] If he had any satisfaction in this matter, it was in the reflection that the House, in listening to the speech of the hon. Member, would probably feel with him so much disgust, that they would be the less inclined to support the Motion with which he had concluded it. That great man, Dr. Chalmers, would, if he were now alive, dispose of the attack of the hon. Member just as he would brush a fly from his back. If the House should adopt the principles of the bill now under consideration, they would spread peace and contentment through many districts of his country; but if, on the contrary, they should reject it, they would leave an undying source of grievance still rankling in the minds of a large portion of the Scottish population.

MR. COCHRANE denied most emphatically that he had spoken disrespectfully of Dr. Chalmers. It was true that he had quoted from the evidence of Dr. Chalmers, and it was also true that he had spoken of him as a man of high name and eminent position. Surely the right hon. Gentleman did not mean to advance such a doctrine as this, that, because Dr. Chalmers was unfortunately no longer in existence, he was to be precluded from referring to his evidence.

VISCOUNT DRUMLANRIG felt it was only due to his hon. Friend the Member for Bridport to say, that he had not understood his speech in the sense which had been attributed to it relating to Dr. Chalmers. He regretted very much—considering his hon. Friend had already had an opportunity of expressing his disapprobation of those who claimed this Bill as a remedy for their grievances, that he should have thought it his duty to offer this opposition to the Bill in its present stage. And, having listened to his speech very attentively, he was at a loss to conceive what good he expected to gain by prolonging a discussion which tended only to promote feelings which should be discouraged. Had he consulted his own feelings only, he should have much preferred giving an entirely silent vote; but representing, as he did, a large constituency who were all one way or another deeply interested in the fate of this Bill, and representing a county which had been the scene of many of the grievances complained of, he felt he should be hardly justified in doing so. He had no feeling connected with this question stronger than the hope he entertained that all superfluous discussion might be as much as possible abridged, on a matter which he sincerely lamented should ever have been brought before the notice of this House at all. He would not enter into the past history of the Free Church, or of the hardships complained of by its members; nor would he analyse the complaints of arrogance and want of humility of which they had been accused by their opponents. He believed that there had been faults on both sides. He would only say that, as a Scotchman, he believed he was pretty well acquainted with the real nature and the true extent of the grievances complained of; and it was his opinion that those grievances ought to be relieved. He had looked attentively into the Bill; and he was bound to say, that while he considered it a practical and sufficient remedy for all that had been complained of, he did not think that what it required from the proprietors of land was in any way arbitrary, because, make the rights of property as stringent as possible, still there were two boons which could not be refused, even to the pauper: the one was, sufficient land upon which to worship God during his lifetime; and sufficient land to inter him after his death. With this impression, he hoped that the House would unanimously and speedily come to the conclusion that the sooner this question was decided, and the Bill passed into a law, the more speedily we are likely to do justice, not to one party, but to all parties in Scotland—not to the Free Church only, but to the best interests of the Established Church also. He felt justified in urging this mode of proceeding, because he could not in any way be supposed to do so from any interested motives, or from party bias, seeing that he was one of those who deeply deplored the schism that had taken place in the Church of Scotland. Indeed, he for one did not think that the cause of religion was advanced by such importance being given to any church at all—an importance which was due to our faith alone. But he thought that it was of the highest importance that the existing feeling in Scotland should be allayed. The schism had taken place, and everything should be done to prevent the unity of the church, which had unfortunately been destroyed, from being turned into open hostility. He wished to say nothing harsh against the Free Church. He hoped they might prove themselves worthy of all that was claimed for them; but he distinctly wished to state that he gave his vote to-day for the sake of Christianity, not especially for the sake of the Free Church.

Mr. MONCKTON MILNES remarked, that the Free Church had attained its present position without such an exceptional measure as was now asked for it; and he entertained no doubt that it would ultimately attain all that was desired without resorting to an alteration of the statute law of the kingdom in its special favour. The animosity which had existed on the Free Church question was now greatly allayed, and he thought that this Bill would tend to revive rather than diminish it. By this time those noblemen who had been alluded to would no doubt reconsider their determination, upon finding that this movement was no ephemeral burst of enthusiasm, but the true religious feeling of a large portion of the people of Scotland. When that fact was properly understood, those proprietors would no longer refuse sites. He had no objection to a measure giving to any body of Christian men a right of procuring sites for the purpose of worship; but he could not conscientiously give that special privilege to one body in Scotland only, merely because in the first enthusiasm of the division some persons might have behaved unjustly.

Mr. OSWALD: Sir, when this Bill was last before the House, I took the liberty of expressing my regret that so important a subject was discussed in the absence of almost every Member of the Government. I expressed still more regret that a vote should have been taken without any discussion. I trust that this latter circumstance may be pleaded as my excuse for going more at length into the subject than I should otherwise have done. In the first place, however, I cannot help remarking, that I read in the *Scottish Guardian*, with considerable pain, the following passage in the Scottish quarter:—

> "It is somewhat curious to notice the chief ground of resistance to the Bill taken up even by those who have no great love to the Free Church, namely, that if it had been a special measure, intended for their relief exclusively, they would gladly have supported it; but extending, as it does, to all dissenters of whatever denomination, they felt compelled to give their opposition to so sweeping a measure. We may, however, rest assured, that had the Bill been restricted to the case of the Free Church, many of these same parties would have been equally loud in denouncing the pretension of the Free Church in seeking to be placed on a different footing from other non-established bodies, and to get exclusive advantages which she would not concede to others, and in declaring, that though they might have considered favourably a general measure, they could give no countenance to such an exclusively sectarian Bill."

Now, Sir, I think such a charge unbecoming. I have never in this House stated any thing as being the reason for my vote, which was not the reason, and I never shall do so. Before I sit down I hope to be able to show, that so far from raising fictitious objections to this Bill, for the purpose of preventing the Free Church from obtaining sites, I am most anxious that these sites should be obtained, and this controversy settled. Sir, I beg leave to disclaim all feeling of hostility to the Free Church. Opposed to her I am, and must be—holding as I do the tenets of a Church very different from her. But I feel no personal hostility. Nay, I entertain on some points sentiments of high admiration and sympathy for her. I applaud the sacrifice she made in renouncing the endowment and alliance of the State, when she thought her liberty infringed. I admire the sacrifices she has made, and is still making, to carry her principles and her teaching to every corner of Scotland. When I look, as I have lately done with some care, into the history of the secession, I can, in no small degree, sympathise with the motives which led to it. If any one will examine the documents of that period, he will not be surprised, if he knew anything of the previous ecclesiastical history of Scotland, at what then happened. He will find that the Court of Session interfered with the spiritual courts of Scotland, in a manner which could not but offend the great body of a people peculiarly jealous of such interference. He will find in the Auchterarder case, that of thirteen Judges five pronounced against the competence of the Court to entertain the question brought before it. He will find that Lord Fullarton, a most learned and distinguished Judge, declared his opinion of that incompetence in the Culsamond case. In the Strathbogie case, the same learned Judge differed from his brethren on the bench, yet the Court interfered to compel ecclesiastical officers to proceed to ordination, although inhibited by their ecclesiastical superiors. And I might go on to show, that in nearly every instance you had a divided bench pronouncing judgments on intricate points of law—all which points affected, in a strong degree, the feelings and, if you will, the prejudices of Scotland; which feelings and prejudices, as I believe, truly represent the real Presbyterian belief of that country. When I consider these things, especially when I look at them with Scottish eyes, I cannot wonder that my countrymen, in large numbers, left the Establishment. Now, Sir, when I look at what these men have done to maintain their cause, what do I find? I find that there are 684 ministers chargeable on the sustentation fund, which this year amounts to 88,974*l.*, giving upwards of 120*l.* a year from that fund to every minister. The congregational fund amounts this year to 71,686*l.*, and consists of sums raised by the different congregations for the ministers of each. The two funds, if added together, would give an average of 200*l.* a year and upwards for the clergy of the Free Church—an average, I believe, considerably more than that which the clergy of the Church of England receive. But this is not all, they also raise money for building churches and manses, for missions, and for education. The whole amount raised by them in 1847—a year of great distress and almost famine—was 276,496*l.*, upwards of a quarter of a million of money; in 1846, it reached 300,000*l.*, I believe. The whole sum collected by them since 1843, amounts to 1,590,462*l.* 17*s.* 6½*d.*, being more than 300,000*l.* a year. Let us compare this with the revenues of the Established Church. The whole amount of tithe payable by the land of Scotland, the rental of which amounts to 9,500,000*l.* sterling, is 177,470*l.* a year; and, including the value of manses, glebes, and Exchequer allowances, the whole value of the State endowment of the Church of Scotland, is, as I find in a memorial presented to Sir Robert Peel in 1843, under 200,000*l.*

Here, then, we have a church in which "not many noble, not many wealthy" are numbered, collecting voluntarily 76,000*l.* a year more than all the wealth of Scotland contributes to the Established Church. Truly it may be said, "they did cast in of their abundance; she, out of her want, hath cast in all that she hath." Such is the comparison I must draw between the endowment of the State, and the voluntary oblations of the Free Church. But when I compare the Free Church to the communion to which I belong—the Episcopal Church of Scotland—shame almost seals my lips. Sir, the present Episcopal Church of Scotland numbers among its members the noblest and the richest of the land. I have heard it said that the rental of its members amounts to two-thirds of the whole rent of Scotland—yet what has been done for her? The Episcopal Church Society collected, if I rightly understand the account which I hold in my hand, something less than 3,649*l.* This sum affords the means of making up the poorer livings to 90*l.* a year. The Free Church pays 128*l.* a year from the sustentation fund alone. Such is the comparison I draw—such is the contribution of the high-born and the wealthy to a Church which boasts, and not without reason, of a pure apostolic descent, whose members in the last century shed their blood and lavished their means in a desperate cause, with a desperate heroism; and we, their descendants, have not even built again the altars which in that century were overthrown. We give this pittance to our clergy, and we starve our bishops. When I see all this, what can I say but that the Free Church has given a noble testimony to the sincerity of her religious belief—that she has read us a lesson at which we should blush, and set us an example worthy of being immediately followed. After what I have said, I trust that I shall not be accused of hostility to the Free Church. I am most anxious that this matter should be settled, but I must state the objections I still entertain to the Bill before the House. Now, I must repeat that the evil complained of is one of a very partial nature. The Free Church have nearly 700 ministers in Scotland, yet there are not, I think, more than twenty-two instances of refusals of sites—of these twenty-two cases there are only eight where the people worship in the open air. Now, I would ask, whether there are sufficient grounds for so sweeping a measure? The localities where sites are refused, or where indeed they can be refused with effect, are not numerous; for it is only where one proprietor hostile to the Free Church possesses a large tract of country, that his refusal can prevent a site from being found. Yet you extend this power to every corner of Scotland. You extend it to towns where there never has been any difficulty in obtaining sites, except the difficulty of paying for them. The evil too, is, I am convinced, one of a temporary nature. Much heat and animosity were excited at the time of the secession by the language used by members of the Free Church. That heat has cooled; that language has ceased in a great measure; I trust it wil lsoon entirely cease and be forgotten; yet you prefer a lasting measure for this passing evil. Moreover, you propose to extend these compulsory powers to every sect in Scotland, to every hundred persons of any Christian denomination, who choose to say they want to build a place for any species of what they call religious worship. Now, I will take the liberty of saying, that there is not one single body of any denomination, except the Free Church, which asks such a measure at your hands. Nay, more, I will, with permission of the House, read to you a protest against the Bill by a body of Dissenters of great influence on this side of the border—I mean the Independents:—

> "Sites for Chapels Bill.—At a meeting of the Scottish Board for Protecting the Civil Rights of Congregational Dissenters, held in Edinburgh on Monday, 1st May, 1848, the attention of the members being called to the Bill recently introduced into Parliament by Mr. Bouverie, intituled, 'A Bill to enable Religious Congregations in Scotland to obtain Sites for Places of Worship,' the following resolutions were moved by Dr. W. Lindsay Alexander, seconded by the Rev. William Swan, and unanimously agreed to:—
>
> "1. That this Board being decidedly opposed to the use of all compulsion in the service of the Church of Christ, and regarding the Sites for Chapels Bill of Mr. Bouverie, as proceeding upon the principle that in certain specified cases the holders of land may be legally compelled to furnish sites for the erection of places of worship, are constrained to express their disapprobation of said Bill on this ground; for whilst they admit the obvious difference between compulsion, when used to effect the sale of land, and compulsion when used to effect the payment of money for the support of the gospel, they are nevertheless of opinion that in neither case is such compulsion compatible with the spiritual nature of the Church.
>
> "2. That whilst maintaining that every holder of land is morally bound in the sight of God, the Great Proprietor of all, not to prevent any body of Christians from worshipping God according to the dictates of their own consciences by refusing

to sell them a portion of the soil on which to erect a building for that purpose; and whilst deploring and condemning the conduct of those proprietors who have so acted in reference to any body of Christians, as well as sincerely sympathising with those who have recently been exposed to suffering on this account—the members of this Board, at the same time, think that this claim should be enforced by moral means alone, and, as respects their own denomination, would rather that it should continue to suffer (as in times past it has repeatedly suffered) inconvenience and injury from the refusal of sites for chapels, than be armed with authority to extort this right from an unwilling landlord, by the strong hand of the civil power.—By order of the Board,

"James M'Laren, Chairman.
"John Stewart, Secretary."

These resolutions were passed a month ago. I have heard not a syllable of any counter resolutions from any other body of Dissenters. I am led then to believe, that these sentiments do not materially differ from those of the great body of Dissenters in Scotland. If this be so, then, why grant powers which not only are not asked for, but which are repelled? Why, in such circumstances take a step which to many appear an invasion, and in this instance a wanton invasion, on the rights of private property? To sum up in a few words my objections, they are these: The number of cases of hardship are few—they are confined to particular localities—they are confined to one sect—the powers of this Bill are asked for by no other sect—by one they are repelled—the evil is of a temporary nature—yet you propose a general measure for these few cases—a national Act for some local grievances—a catholic remedy for a sectarian evil—an enduring statute for a temporary inconvenience. Such, Sir, are the objections which I entertain to this Bill. I stated them on a former occasion; and I then said, that I trusted my hon. Friend (Mr. Bouverie) would announce some modification. I regret he has not done so. My hon. Friend the Member for the county of Roxburgh has given notice of certain amendments which he intends to move in Committee—limiting the operation of the Act to the Free Church, and limiting its duration to two years. Now, I confess that I was disposed to support such a course. I have, however, heard objections from persons for whose superior judgment I entertain so much respect, that I begin to doubt the soundness of my own in the matter. If any better plan is proposed, I shall be glad to vote for it. I will however say, and I trust I may do so without offence, that I look upon the Free Church movement, to a certain extent, as a national one in Scotland—that I believe that Church is very nearly the ideal of what the Scottish Reformers proposed to themselves—that the agitation of this question creates much ill blood in Scotland—that it is impossible for any Member for Scotland to vote on the question, one way or the other, without offending a portion of his constituents—that for all these reasons I think it most desirable the matter should be settled once and for ever. For my own part I should, if I followed my unaided judgment, have agreed to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Berwickshire. I trust, however, that before the debate is closed, some better plan may be suggested, which will meet with the approbation of my hon. Friend who introduced the Bill, and of the Secretary at War who supports it.

Sir J. GRAHAM: At the outset of the observations which I think it necessary to address to the House, I must frankly say that I am compelled to enter once again into the discussion of this subject with more pain and regret than I can well describe. It is an important subject, but I have always regarded it as a painful subject; and, moreover, certain allusions have been made by my hon. Friend the Member for Bridport, which add very deeply to the pain I feel in approaching it. I cannot forget the circumstance, which my hon. Friend has brought to the recollection of the House, that in the Committee of last Session I was brought into collision, more or less hostile, with one of the most eminent men that Scotland has produced during the last century—I of course allude to the late Dr. Chalmers. Here I may be permitted to state, that from my earliest youth I had been honoured with the acquaintance and friendship of that great divine. I admired him as a great philosopher; I venerated him as the most successful champion of evangelical truth; and at no time of my life can I erase from my memory the obligations to him under which I conceive Scotland to lie. I was also brought into contact with another distinguished person, Mr. Spiers, the late Sheriff of Edinburgh—now also no more. And here I will read to the House a short passage from a sermon to which allusion was made in the examination of Dr. Chalmers before the Committee of last year. [The right hon. Baronet read the extract, which was to the general effect that Dr. Chalmers, a great man, and Mr. Spiers, an honest man, had happily gone from this contentious world of quarrels and divisions—that they had escaped from the church militant to the church triumphant—and he hoped and believed that they had found that the world of everlasting life was also the world of everlasting peace.] I could much wish, Sir (continued the right hon. Baronet), to enter upon this discussion in the spirit of peace and conciliation, and not in the temper of anger and strife. I think it useless to refer to the origin of this unhappy struggle. Looking back to those transactions occuring during my public life in which I have borne a part, I can truly say I know of nothing upon which I reflect with more anxiety, than on the part I have thought it my duty to take with reference to the secession of the Free Church from the Establishment in Scotland. I look upon it as the most unfortunate occurrence in modern times as regards the religious peace and happiness of Scotland. I must ever regard that secession as a most unfortunate event; and again I say I should deeply regret if any unintentional error of judgment on my part should have precipitated that event, which I consider a national calamity. But I do not know that in the discharge of my duty I could have taken any other course. It cannot be dissembled that that secession numbers in its ranks a very large portion of the entire population of Scotland—I do not think less than one-third—but at the same time I do not think that this fact constitutes a claim for the seceding body to be treated as a national establishment. And this brings me to the bearings of the Bill now before the House. I must look at the Bill first of all in the state in which it is now presented to us; and, looking at it as a Bill about to pass in its present shape without alteration, I must say I have grave and serious objections to it. It involves a great and general principle. If that principle be really sound, it is a principle which ought not to be confined to Scotland, but which ought to be brought into general operation in every part of the United Kingdom. Now, if you apply that principle to the United Kingdom, consider the terms that are used in the Bill. It provides that members of any religious congregation shall, under certain reservations of minor importance, have a legal right to obtain sites, not for churches only, but for dwellings for their ministers, and for their burying-grounds, to the extent of about three acres. If this principle were to be of general application, observe its practical effect in England, in regard to the many religious sects into which the community is unhappily divided. In populous districts there are, no doubt, many parishes in which ten or more different religious persuasions or denominations are settled. Each one of these sects would have the right to demand and select the number of acres allowed for the purpose of a chapel, a manse, and burying-ground; and in the case of small parishes in which the population is dense, I leave the House to judge how much confusion and discontent would arise, and what infractions of the rights of property would take place. Yet, on the whole, the owners of property in England and in Ireland are not inexorable; and if there were no great difficulty in obtaining sites in those parts of the United Kingdom, why should the owners of land in Scotland be deprived of the privilege of doing that as a matter of grace and favour which persons of the same class, their fellow-subjects elsewhere, are accustomed to do of their own free will? for it was generally felt by them, as well as by others, that every facility ought to be given to the people of this country to enable them to worship God in a manner agreeable to their consciences. He considered legislation on a subject such as this at the present moment extremely inexpedient. To the Bill as it stood he entertained insuperable objections; for England and Ireland it was quite unnecessary, while as regarded Scotland his hon. Friend had stated the case most accurately. He admitted that the extent of the secession was very great; and he was perfectly ready to acknowledge that the members of the Free Church in Scotland were very numerous. Further, he understood that as many as 725 churches had been erected for the use of as many seceding congregations belonging to the Free Church; the sites for which churches had been obtained by grant or purchase. In adverting to this fact, he of course confined himself to Scotland, and he found that at present there were only 30 seceding congregations deprived of sites, and that only eight landlords persevered in refusing them. From the proceedings which took place last Session he had ventured to hope that any pretext for legislation upon this subject would have been avoided by concession, for the cases of absolute refusal by proprietors had been very few. It was true that since this subject had been before Parliament last year, only one concession had been made; but he fully believed that they would have heard of more concessions but for the present ill-advised attempt at legislation. He had reason to believe that if the present measure had not been introduced, other voluntary grants of sites would have been made. He was glad to hear from the right hon. Gentleman opposite (the Secretary at War) that the *Witness* newspaper was not the organ of the Free Church; but whether that journal was to be so considered or not, it was well known to have put forward very severe strictures upon the Duke of Buccleuch respecting his conduct with regard to the Free Church. With the Duke of Buccleuch he had himself been associated in public life; he also enjoyed the advantage of his private friendship—his own property was contiguous to that of the Duke; and he could say, without flattery—which he should scorn to use—that, on the whole, a more kind, more generous, and more just man, did not exist. He knew how the property of the noble Duke was managed, and he knew also, that, with the exception of the matter of the Free Church, there was not a tenant, not a labourer, not a poor man living on the estates of the Duke, who would not be ready to say more in his praise than he (Sir J. Graham) had then said. Still, the best of men were but men; and it was impossible, considering the attacks made upon the noble Duke in the *Witness* newspaper (to which the hon. Member for Bridport referred), that he should continue to be free from some feelings of resentment. No such articles could be published without leaving in his mind a rankling sore. His hon. Friend had referred to some portion of the comparison there instituted between the Scottish and the Galician nobles, and to the caution there given them, that in the one case as in the other their serfs would rise against them and overturn their power. This was rather a strong indication of the temper and feeling which that journal desired to excite. But it was well known that its columns abounded with charges of the most serious kind against the Duke of Buccleuch, imputing to him religious bigotry, and alleging that he was influenced by a determination to clear his estates of all tenants who were members of the Free Church. It was well known that the Duke of Buccleuch publicly vindicated himself from that accusation; that he had shown those charges to have been false, calumnious, and malignant. The charges were withdrawn; and it was not now pretended that the noble Duke had been actuated by any such motives as were then imputed to him. It was somewhat a matter of regret to him that the noble Duke had not yielded to public opinion. He (Sir J. Graham) should, perhaps, not exercising a better judgment, have adopted a different course. With regard, however, to the cases in which sites for churches had been refused, he could not but regard them as cases of exceptions, which ought not to become the subject of any measure of general legislation, for they were not dependent upon any general principle. He should not go the length of saying but that legislation might be necessary in the last resort; but he altogether objected to such legislation as was proposed by means of the present Bill, for he thought that it was by private Acts and not by public legislation that the evil ought to be met, and that each case should stand upon substantive ground—that it should be made the subject of a private Bill, not of a sweeping measure. To this course it appeared to him that there could be no objection excepting that of expense. Now, upon that point, he must beg to observe that there were in the Free Church 800,000 members; that they had subscribed 1,000,000*l.* of money already for Church purposes; that they had built 725 churches; it would not, therefore, be pretended that if there were any case of gross oppression affecting the Free Church, they could not in half an hour raise the funds necessary for their own defence and the vindication of their own rights. Here, then, he would say that there was no case for general legislation, and that if time were given, no measure such as this would be necessary. If circumstances showed that there existed a disposition to adhere to an unjust refusal, a salutary check would be found in bringing each case before Parliament. The evidence might be taken, the facts strictly examined, and to that mode of proceeding he should give his consent. It was not, perhaps, necessary that he should express his opinions any further upon these topics; upon the whole it appeared to him that a general enactment was not expedient. If they went into Committee, possibly the proposition of the hon. Member for Roxburgh might remove many objections; still he entertained strong aversion to a measure such as the Bill now under consideration. If it were likely to prove advantageous to the Free Church of Scotland, why confine it to that body? The hon. Member for Ayrshire read a resolution showing that many persons (the old Seceders and Independents, as we understood) were opposed to this mode of legislation; and, for his own part, he did not see why the members of the Free Church were alone entitled to its benefits; further, he must be allowed to say that he did not see how it could be defended except upon general grounds—a species of defence to which it was not entitled. Although he thought the Amendment now proposed might be some improvement, he still should vote against the further progress of the measure, expressing at the same time a strong desire that even the private legislation to which he referred might be superseded by the voluntary concessions of the landowners in Scotland.

MR. SCOTT lamented sincerely the introduction of the Bill then before them, for he thought that if the landed proprietors were allowed to take their own course, a great deal of the angry feeling which now prevailed might by this time have altogether subsided, and all the sites at present refused by landlords might have been cheerfully conceded. There were very few cases in which the parties attending Free churches had more than five miles to travel —a distance which any one acquainted with Scotland must know did not exceed the distance which members of the Established Church frequently were required to pass over. After what the House had heard with regard to the conduct of the Duke of Buccleuch, it was not necessary for him to trouble them with many observations upon that subject; he desired only to say, it would be no wonder if that noble person felt no small degree of resentment at the treatment he had received; for his proceedings had been illustrated by pictures, and he had been abused up hill and down dale. He, as well as the right hon. Baronet behind him, was glad to hear that the *Witness* was not the organ of the Free Church, though it formerly had been. Its charges against the Duke of Buccleuch were most numerous and most unjust. Not one Free Church minister in those districts where the noble Duke had been reported to have interfered so harshly, was ever examined before the Committee.

MR. HUME, having always objected to interference with property, and to the introduction of Bills connected with religious matters, wished to state that he supported the present Bill for the sake of peace. If they were to have religious liberty in Scotland, they should also have the means of enjoying it. Though the cases of complaint might be few, the sooner they were settled the better; and the only mode of settling them peaceably and speedily appeared to be by means of the present measure.

MR. SPOONER wished to explain why he intended to give a different vote on the present occasion from that he gave on the second reading of the Bill. When the Bill was brought forward no one opposed it; the House went to a division without a discussion, and there appeared to be a strong *primâ facie* case in favour of the measure. Under these circumstances, he had thought that it would not have been treating that highly influential and respectable body the Free Church in a proper manner if they had refused to enter into the consideration of their case. That day, however, a discussion had taken place, and what had fallen from the right hon. Baronet the Member for Ripon had convinced him (Mr. Spooner), that, looking to the peace and interests of the Free Church itself, it would be the duty of the House not to go into Committee on the Bill.

The House divided on the question that the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question:—Ayes 84; Noes 59: Majority 25.

List of the AYES.

Armstrong, Sir A.
Bailey, J.
Baines, M. T.
Bellew, R. M.
Bernal, R.
Bowring, Dr.
Boyd, J.
Brotherton, J.
Bunbury, E. H.
Buxton, Sir E. N.
Chichester, Lord J. L.
Clay, J.
Clay, Sir E.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Corbally, M. E.
Cowan, C.
Craig, W. G.
Crawford, W. S.
Dalrymple, Capt.
Davie, Sir H. R. F.
Drumlanrig, Visct.
Duff, G. S.
Duncan, G.
Dundas, G.
Ellice, E.
Elliot, hon. J. E.
Evans, W.
Ewart, W.
Fergus, J.
Ferguson, Sir R. A.
Fordyce, A. D.
Forster, M.
Fortescue, C.
Fox, W. J.
Freeston, Col.
Greene, J.
Grenfell, C. W.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Hall, Sir B.
Hardcastle, J. A.
Hastie, A.
Hayter, W. G.
Heywood, J.
Hobhouse, T. B.
Hume, J.
Jervis, Sir J.
M'Taggart, Sir J.
Maitland, T.
Marshall, J. G.
Marshall, W.
Matheson, J.
Matheson, Col.
Melgund, Visct.
Mitchell, T. A.
Morgan, H. K. G.
Morpeth, Visct.
Morris, D.
O'Brien, J.
O'Connell, M. J.
Perfect, R.
Pilkington, J.
Power, Dr.
Pusey, P.
Rawdon, Col.

Reynolds, J.
Ricardo, J. L.
Robartes, T. J. A.
Roche, E. B.
Rutherfurd, A.
Scholefield, W.
Smollett, A.
Somerville, rt. hn. Sir W.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Stuart, Lord D.
Stuart, Lord J.
Talfourd, Serj.
Tennent, R. J.
Thicknesse, R. A.
Thornely, T.
Traill, G.
Westhead, J. P.
Williams, J.
Wilson, M.
Wortley, rt. hon. J. S.

TELLERS.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Bouverie, R.

List of the NOES.

Arkwright, G.
Bankes, G.
Barrington, Visct.
Benbow, J.
Beresford, W.
Bourke, R. S.
Bowles, Adm.
Brackley, Visct.
Bruce, C. L. C.
Cayley, E. S.
Cholmeley, Sir M.
Christopher, R. A.
Christy, S.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.
Cocks, T. S.
Conolly, Col.
Damer, hon. Col.
Deedes, W.
Drummond, H.
Drummond, H. H.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Du Pre, C. G.
Edwards, H.
Estcourt, J. B. B.
Farrer, J.
Floyer, J.
Gordon, Adm.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Halsey, T. P.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hodgson, W. N.
Hood, Sir A.
Hope, Sir J.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Johnstone, Sir J.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Lacy, H. C.
Lascelles, hon. E.
Lockhart, A. E.
Lockhart, W.
Mackenzie, W. F.
M'Neill, D.
Milnes, R. M.
Oswald, A.
Packe, C. W.
Patten, J. W.
Reid, Col.
Repton, G. W. J.
Rushout, Capt.
Scott, hon. F.
Seymer, H. K.
Sibthorp, Col.
Spearman, H. J.
Stafford, A.
Stuart. J.
Thompson, Col.
Wall, C. B.
Willoughby, Sir H.

TELLERS.
Cochrane, A. D. R. W. B.
Spooner, R.

House went into Committee *pro formâ* and resumed.

House adjourned a few minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, June 8, 1848.

MINUTES.] *Took the Oaths.*—The Earl of Rosse.

PUBLIC BILLS.—1ª Ecclesiastical Unions and Divisions of Parishes (Ireland); Independence of Parliament; Declaratory Suits.

2ª Sale of Beer Regulation.

Reported.—Great Yarmouth Freemen Disfranchisement; Petty Bag Office.

3ª and passed;—Tobago Relief and Immigration into British Guiana and Trinidad.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Bury, and other Places, against the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sundays.—From Leith and South Shields, against any Alteration in the Navigation Laws.—From Members of a Society of the Ancient Order of Foresters, Bristol, in favour of the Provident Associations Fraud Prevention Bill.—From Members of the Mauritius Association of London, complaining of the Effect produced by the Sugar Duties Act, and for Relief.—From Robert Owen, for a full and fair Examination of his Plans for Ameliorating the Condition of Mankind.—From London, for Alteration of Lunatic Act, and Lunatic Asylums, and Pauper Lunatic Acts.—From Kircudbright, against the Marriage (Scotland), and Registering Births, &c. (Scotland) Bills.

SALE OF BEER REGULATION BILL.

The EARL of HARROWBY moved the Second Reading of the Sale of Beer Regulation Bill.

LORD MONTEAGLE considered that this Bill was one of great importance. The subject of the sale of spirituous liquors on the Sunday had of late been brought under their Lordships' notice by petitions; but he thought that any one who considered the matter would feel that it would be most unjust and oppressive to prohibit the sale of beer and other liquors on the Sunday. Their Lordships were aware that there was at present a direct prohibition, under penalties, of the sale of liquors on Sunday during the hours of divine service. The Act of Parliament which prohibited the opening of taverns and public-houses until after one o'clock on the Sunday in the metropolis, had certainly had a most beneficial effect in repressing crime, and in improving the moral condition of the people; and Mr. Rushton, the police magistrate of Liverpool, stated that the same result had followed the adoption of a similar regulation in that town. As the law now stood, persons to whom licenses were granted were prohibited from selling liquors during the hours of divine service; and if they violated that condition they were subjected to penalties which were immediately recoverable. He would therefore suggest to the noble Earl that he should propose the repeal of all penalties for violating the existing law, or the effect of this Bill would be to subject tavern keepers to double penalties.

LORD BROUGHAM considered this a very useful and safe Bill. No one could deny that the Sabbath was now much more strictly observed than was the case thirty or forty years ago; but he would recommend their Lordships not to overdo legislation with respect to Sabbath observances. He considered it of the greatest importance that the Sabbath should be duly observed; but he believed that nothing was more likely to prevent that observance than ill-advised legislation, which might interfere with the just relaxations of the people. He thought it would be convenient to refer the Bill to a small Select Committee.

LORD CAMPBELL observed, that in London the principle upon which the present Bill was founded, had been proved by experience to act in a most admirable way, and he saw no reason why it should not be extended further.

Lord KINNAIRD said, he hoped that the Bill would be extended to Scotland. In fact, the whole system of licensing in that country required revision, for not only at grocers' shops, but at turnpike gates, spirits were sold. It had had a most demoralising effect. At these places change was often given in the shape of glasses of whiskey, if the parties desired it.

Lord WHARNCLIFFE said, he believed there was no part of the country which more required change of the laws in this respect than Scotland.

Bill read 2ª.

MR. ROBERT OWEN.

Lord BROUGHAM presented a petition from Mr. Robert Owen, praying that his plans for ameliorating the social condition of mankind may be fully and fairly examined. Mr. Owen was a gentleman who had ever entertained the most benevolent and tolerant views. He did not participate in the communist views of M. Louis Blanc and his colleagues. He was the advocate of peace. He stated that in the present excited state of Europe, when such a violent conflict was going on between the aristocratic and the democratic principles—a conflict which he (Lord Brougham) was happy to say was confined to beyond the seas, for we knew nothing of any such conflict here, for he believed there never was a time when republicanism was at a greater discount in this country than at this present moment; but this gentleman said, that truth could alone protect the people in their present half civilised state (that was his opinion) from the dangers by which they were surrounded, and he therefore again submitted his views on the subject of our political and social condition to the consideration of their Lordships. He said that by the creation of labour, plentiful means of subsistence might be found for the whole of the people. He (Lord Brougham) would take this opportunity of asking the noble Marquess, whether he had any means of ascertaining the extent and amount to which English capital had been invested within the last fifteen or twenty years in foreign trade, foreign loans, and foreign works in America, in Spain, in Portugal, in Belgium, and in France? He was constantly applied to for information on this subject. He wished to know whether the Government had any information, particularly with respect to France? A very short answer was often given. It was often said to these poor people who had lost their money—"It served you right for taking your capital abroad." If we were to have trade and commerce—if we were not to shut ourselves within a brazen wall—how was it possible for some capital not to go abroad?

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: I am afraid that I can give my noble and learned Friend but little satisfaction. We have no information on the subject. Government has no right to interfere with the application of capital. Much good might be done by means of private inquiry; but those means are quite as much at the disposal of my noble and learned Friend as of the Government.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, June 8, 1848.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—2º Highways; Commons Inclosure.

Reported.—Game Certificates for Killing Hares (Scotland). 3º and passed;—Law of Entail (Scotland); Game Certificates for Killing Hares.

Petitions Presented. By Mr. T. Baring, from Members of the Mauritius Association in London, to take the State of the West India Colonies into Consideration.—By Mr. Chichester, from Shipowners and Merchants of Belfast, against a Repeal of the Navigation Laws.

THE CHARTIST DISTURBANCES.

Mr. G. THOMPSON rose to put to the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department the question of which he had given notice. He craved the indulgence of the House for one or two minutes, while he stated distinctly his reasons for putting the question which he should presently put to the right hon. Gentleman, and explained the nature of that question.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman must confine himself to the question.

Mr. G. THOMPSON desired to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he was in possession of information from any quarter that, on Sunday the 4th instant, certain outrages were committed on peaceable, loyal, and unoffending individuals in the neighbourhood of the Tower Hamlets? He put this question because he had in his hand the testimony of more than 60 witnesses, all of whom followed decent occupations, while many of them were respectable inhabitants and shopkeepers in the Tower Hamlets. The testimony of these persons was consistent and concurrent. It amounted to this, that many unprovoked outrages were perpetrated by the police, not merely in Bishop Bonner's Fields, but even more than a mile from the spot where the Chartist meeting took place: and the parties alleged that unless the Government instituted a searching inquiry into all the facts of the case, and adopted measures for the prevention of similar outrages in future, a large amount of dissatisfaction would be created in the minds of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he had received similar information to that which he (Mr. G. Thompson) had received, and whether he intended to adopt any steps to ascertain whether or not the charges brought against the police were well founded?

SIR GEORGE GREY: The hon. Gentleman having yesterday given me notice of his intention to ask me this evening if I had received from persons, residing in the neighbourhoods of Bethnal-green and the Tower Hamlets, complaints of unprovoked assaults committed on Sunday last, in those localities, by the police on peaceable and unoffending subjects, I have made inquiries into the matter, and I have come prepared with evidence respecting the conduct of the police, which I should have been glad to have submitted to the consideration of the House (had it been possible) when this subject was under discussion on a former occasion. But in the first place, I will address myself to the question of the hon. Gentleman; and I hope to be able to give such an answer as may prove satisfactory to the House. It is true that I have received from certain quarters some complaints respecting the conduct of the police on the occasion alluded to. I have received a letter dated June the 5th, Monday last, which conveys such a complaint. It has been addressed to me by a person signing himself W. Higgins, and describing himself as of Bonner's-field, Victoria-park, in which the writer states that in his opinion—an opinion which he assures me is shared by all who reside in his neighbourhood—the conduct of the police on Sunday last was the most brutal and barbarous that has ever been witnessed. There is a postscript to the letter, to which are attached the names of seven individuals, who bear testimony to the truth of Mr. Higgins's statement, So that, in point of fact, I may say that I have received a letter signed by eight persons, complaining of the behaviour of the police. I have, moreover, this day received another letter, the purport of which I will state to the House, for I beg to assure the House that nothing can be more remote from my wish, or my intention, than a desire to withhold any information I may possess upon this subject. The communication in question is signed "James Fox," and the writer resides, I believe, in Bethnal-green. He states that he has a memorial to present on the subject of the conduct of the police, and he writes to inquire whether a deputation of three gentlemen may wait upon me at the Home Office for the purpose of presenting it. It is probable that it relates to the statement of the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets, and I am, therefore, willing that it should be classed as another of the communications that have reached me complaining of the conduct of the police, although it does not distinctly appear that such is the case. Since I came into this House this evening a third letter on the subject has been put into my hand. It professes to be written by Arthur Matthews, and conveys the information that a committee of householders has been appointed to inquire into the conduct of the police, and to investigate the cases of those who conceive that they have received ill treatment at the hands of that body. That is the whole of the complaints that I have received. The three communications which I have described have reached me; but it is right that I should add, that not one word of the evidence which the hon. Gentleman assures the House he holds in his hands to corroborate the statements of those who allege misconduct against the force, has been forwarded to me. I have received as yet nothing whatever—I have heard as yet nothing whatever—which in my opinion can detract from the praise which is justly due to the police; and I therefore think that I should be guilty of an act of gross injustice to the police, and that I should be leading the House to a most erroneous conclusion, were I to confine myself to a simple answer to the question of the hon. Member. I have received an accumulated mass of evidence to the contrary effect—evidence of the most trustworthy description, showing the character of the meetings held at Bonner's-fields and Victoria-park on Sunday last, and demonstrating that, so far from the conduct of the police being marked by a spirit of unprovoked aggression, or by a disposition to any unnecessary interference, they could not properly have acted otherwise than they did under the command of their officers; and that they behaved during the day with a forbearance and a firmness worthy of all commendation; never exercising an uncalled-for severity, but resisting, as they were bound to do, an attack which was wantonly made upon them—an attack which was dangerous to the lives of the parties who were the objects of it. Meetings of this nature had been recently held in different parts of the metropolis, and urgent representations were made to the Government to prevent them. They had invariably given rise to turbulence and disorder. They were, in fact, riotous and tumultuous assemblages, and had become intolerable nuisances to the loyal and well-disposed in the localities in which they were held, disturbing their daily occupations, and rendering it impossible for them to attend, in a satisfactory manner, to their business. Under these circumstances, it was notified to me that it was in contemplation that other meetings of a similar character were to be held on Sunday last, in the neighbourhood of the Tower Hamlets; and the commissioners of police, acting under my directions, stationed an additional force in the vicinity of the places where it was intended that the assemblages should be held. A copy of the instructions which, upon that occasion, were given by the commissioners for the guidance of the inspectors, I hold in my hand. [The right hon. Baronet read the instructions, which were, in substance, that the police should not interfere so long as the meeting was orderly and well-conducted; but that they should be prepared to act with promptness in the event of any infraction of the peace being attempted. The commissioners had previously issued a notice that these meetings were illegal if they were continued after dark; and the police had instructions to disperse them if that rule were violated.] I am also in possession of the report of the inspector under whose immediate charge the police acted at the meeting in Bonner's-fields. It is as follows:—

> "A meeting of the Irish Confederates took place on Sunday last, at three o'clock p.m., and another of the Chartists at five o'clock p.m., in Bonner's-fields, Victoria-park, Bethnal-green. Inspector Waller, with a body of police, were stationed in the St. James's district church, which is about 150 yards from the meeting place, but who were kept from view of persons present at the meeting, so as not to excite the same, but to be present in case of necessity. I was also at different parts of the field during the meeting, being in charge of the division, in consequence of the unfitness for duty of Mr. Marquard, the superintendent, who had been stabbed in the left leg on the previous Wednesday whilst dispersing an assemblage of persons at Stepney-green. It was suspected, from this circumstance and prevalent reports, that a great number of those attending the meeting would come armed, as, in fact, their leaders at several meetings had advised they should. The latter meeting was attended by about 3,000 persons of all descriptions, and all appeared perfectly quiet until twenty-five minutes to seven o'clock, when it broke up, and Inspector Waller had just been to one side of the field to receive instructions from me, when, as he was in the act of returning, he saw about 400 or 500 persons throwing stones at the church windows; and on his entering the grounds of the church, the mob raised a shout of execration, saying, 'There is the b—— inspector, give it him;' upon which a volley of stones were thrown at him, several of which struck him on various parts of the body. And the same was again done at the church windows, which were fairly crushed from the effect. The men who had been stationed in the church were then brought out, who acted perfectly steady, and the people were called on to disperse quietly, but which was answered by another discharge of stones, which struck several of the men, who were then ordered forward, and directed to clear the mob from the field, which was done after great resistance on the part of the mob. About 150 persons again assembled at the corner of Bonner-street, who assailed the police with stones; but although much resistance was here shown, they were finally cleared from the field. Information had at the commencement been sent off to the station in this division, as well as to the H and N divisions, for reinforcements; and about this time Superintendent Johnson, of the N division, with a body of mounted and dismounted men, came up, and the by-streets, &c. were then cleared by them. A sergeant and seven police constables of this division were wounded, and many others struck; five of them are still unfit for duty from the ill-usage. Eleven prisoners were apprehended, viz. two for assaulting the police, six for throwing stones and breaking windows, and three for exciting the mob to rescue, &c., who are all committed for trial. I beg to attach letters received by me from the Rev. Mr. Houghton, the incumbent of St. James' church, who saw the whole proceeding; from the Rev. Mr. Kean, minister of St. Jude's; from Mr. Curtis, superintendent of Victoria-park; from Mr. Thompson, a respectable linendraper, Commercial-road; and from special constables who were present all the time; and three others, bearing testimony to the good and temperate conduct of the police, and in reference to the annoyance experienced by these meetings.
>
> "Robert Horn, Inspector,
> for Superintendent Marquard, sick."

The inspector states, in addition, that he has received several letters from persons who witnessed the proceedings, and more especially from the clergyman of the church referred to, and of other churches in the neighbourhood, who were willing to corroborate his statements and to state their opinion of the conduct of the police. I will not trespass on the attention of the House by reading many extracts from the mass of letters I have received on this subject, but I will take leave to read one passage from a letter from Mr. Houghton, not complaining of the conduct of the police, but showing the great danger which might have resulted from their not interfering earlier, and, therefore, more effectually :—

> "Gentlemen—I beg to state to you that yesterday (Sunday) afternoon a very large Chartist meeting, amounting, as was supposed, to 7,000 persons, was held in the open grounds fronting the church and parsonage of St. James, Victoria-park; that the whole of this neighbourhood was kept in a state of disgraceful excitement from three o'clock until half-past nine; that a body of police, amounting to about thirty-six men, under Inspector Waller, were in and about the church, awaiting orders to disperse the meeting, who, in addition to the alarm they were occasioning, were being acted upon by inflammatory and revolutionary speeches; that this state of things was allowed to continue till the mob began, by throwing stones at Inspector Waller and the windows of the church, peremptorily to call for the interference of the police. . . . At my request Inspector Waller was so good as to leave a serjeant and six men for the protection of my house during the first hours of the night. . . . Why are the ratepayers of this parish to be exposed week after week to annoyance, insult, and apprehension of danger, and now I may add narrow escapes of life? I can show a brickbat, which was hurled at my dining-room window, which would have been sufficient to kill a person."

I hold in my hand no less than eighty-one letters from various persons residing in that district, who concur in describing the great inconvenience which must inevitably result to the public from those meetings, and write to express their admiration of the forbearance as well as the firmness with which the police acted. This is the best answer that I can give to the inquiry of the hon. Member: so far as I can learn there is but one opinion in the district as to the conduct of the police. I had been all along led to suppose—and notwithstanding the three communications to which I alluded in the commencement of this statement I am still under the same impression—that, amongst those who are best informed on the subject, there is an unanimous feeling in the district that the police only acted in the discharge of their duty, and that they acquitted themselves throughout in a manner which entitles them to the highest praise. I think it would be well if hon. Members, who may desire information respecting the true character of the proceedings on Sunday evening, would take the trouble of reading the reports of cases arising out of those proceedings, which have be enrecently adjudicated upon in the various police courts, and more particularly in Worship-street. Let them read the cases of disorderly conduct which were proved on oath, before the magistrates of that office, to have occurred on Sunday last; and let them bear in mind that no less than twenty men have been committed to take their trial at the Central Criminal Court for violent and wanton assaults on the police. Of course I will not enter into the discussion of those cases, or say one word to prejudge what is to be a matter of judicial investigation before a legal tribunal; but this I will say, that a glance over the police reports will suffice to show the nature of the proceedings in question. I this very day received a deputation of magistrates and others, residing in the neighbourhood of Bethnal-green and Hackney, who waited on me to present a dutiful memorial to Her Majesty, in which, after assuring Her of the abhorrence with which they viewed the scenes that have lately taken place in the metropolis, they conclude by tendering their services for the preservation of peace, law, and order. One of the gentlemen on that deputation was himself an eye-witness to what occurred last Sunday near Victoria-park, and he assured me that nothing could be more unexceptionable than the conduct of the police. Having said thus much, I will take leave to read to the House an extract from a memorial presented to me this day by persons who describe themselves as proprietors of houses contiguous to Victoria-park :—

> "The humble memorial of the undersigned, being proprietors of or inhabitants of houses contiguous to Victoria-park, showeth—That on the vacant ground, known as Bonner's Hall-fields, disorderly assemblages have, for a lengthened period, been held on the Sabbath-day for the discussion of political or other subjects, by which the public peace has been endangered to an alarming and painful extent—that the said meetings have generally consisted of very young persons, together with a large body of the working classes of both sexes. That speeches of the most inflammatory nature have been made, tending to excite the hearers to the subversion of authoritative rule and good will. That your memorialists, viewing with terror and alarm a manifest desire on the part of a portion of the populace to continue these meetings, refer you (as a plea for this memorial) to the painfully disgraceful scenes of Sunday afternoon, June the 4th, last, when property was destroyed and life endangered, the greater portion of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood and its environs prevented leaving their houses to attend their respective places of worship, or enjoying the benefits of the Victoria-park, so liberally prepared by the Government for the use and recreation of the metropolis at large, but more especially for the inhabitants of the eastern end of London."

The memorialists, after stating that they were dreading violence and bloodshed, and living in a state of the greatest mental anxiety and alarm, by the continual allowance of these meetings on the before-named fields, proceed—

> "Urgently to implore that the meetings may be instantly suppressed, public confidence restored, the Sabbath-day honoured, and the very extensively populated neighbourhood resume its wonted peaceable appearance."

Such is the answer I have to give with respect to the character of the meeting—the conduct of the men who made a wanton and unprovoked attack on the police—and the conduct of the police themselves. As regards the statements which the hon. Member says he is in possession of, to prove the truth of the allegations that have been made to him, all I can say is, that parties who believe that they have been aggrieved by the police, have, if their complaints be capable of proof, the same remedy that is open to the police themselves. A printed placard, headed "Alleged police outrages," and which has been widely circulated, notifies the fact that a committee of householders has been appointed to investigate the cases of persons who conceive that they have just cause of complaint against the police, and to that committee all aggrieved parties have been invited to apply. Up to this moment not one single complaint has, so far as I have been able to ascertain, been made to any magistrate of unprovoked or unjustifiable aggression on the part of the police; and I must say, that a police-court, and not the House of Commons, appears to me the proper place for inquiries of that kind. There the charges can be examined into in full, and if a *primâ facie* case, or any case at all, be made out against the police, it can be disposed of by the magistrates after hearing both sides. If the magistrates should think the cases not to be of sufficient magnitude to justify their being sent to trial, they have a power of summary jurisdiction; but if, on the other hand, they should be of opinion that the charges are indeed of the grave character described by the hon. Member, I am sure that the magistrates, in the exercise of that sound discretion which has dictated all their decisions in this matter, will see the propriety of submitting the cases to the consideration of a jury; and by the decision of that jury I, for one, shall be quite content to abide. I beg to assure the hon. Member that there is no disposition on the part of the Government to interfere with meetings of a legitimate and constitutional character, convened for fair discussion, or for the purpose of petitioning Parliament; but the character of the meetings recently held in this metropolis utterly deprives the parties who assist at them of any pretext for saying that they were convened for any such purposes; and in deference, therefore, to the general wish of the inhabitants of the metropolis, the police have received orders to afford them such protection against such meetings as the circumstances of the case may require.

Subject at an end.

NAVIGATION LAWS—ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Order of the Day for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Navigation Laws read.

SIR J. WALSH said, that those hon. Gentlemen who had on that occasion inscribed free trade on their banner, had taken up a somewhat different position from that which they had previously occupied whenever subjects of that kind had been brought under the consideration of the House. On all former occasions when a great interest had been attacked in the name of free trade, whether the miners or the glove-makers, or the farmers, or the West India planters, the language held by those hon. Gentlemen was this — "Protection is altogether an abuse; protection to you is a wrong inflicted on the rest of the community. You have enjoyed a protection which has been a robbery on all other classes; we can no longer allow you to enjoy it. We hope that when you are deprived of a privilege which you have long been permitted wrongfully to enjoy, you will be able to support the competition to which you will be exposed. We do not wish to crush you to the earth; we shall be rejoiced to find that you will be able to withstand that competition. But we tell you fairly and frankly, that as you have no right to protection, so if you cannot withstand competition you must resign yourselves to absolute and irremediable ruin." It had, in fact, been hitherto laid down, that "buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest" was an unalterable principle, to which every opposing consideration ought to be sacrificed. But on the present occasion no such language had been held. Almost every Member who had addressed the House in favour of the resolution of his right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade, had declared that he never would support it, if he could conceive for one moment that the adoption of that resolution would tend to destroy the maritime supremacy of England, and that the shipowner would thereby be exposed to a competition with which he would not be able successfully to contend. Now, it was a most important point for the House to remember, that even in the estimation of the advocates of the measure, the repeal of the navigation laws was only defended on the ground that it would not injure our maritime ascendancy. Taking a lower tone than they had adopted on former occasions, they admitted that the superiority of our marine was the more important matter, and all their arguments went to show that the navigation laws might be repealed without risk of destroying or impairing it. But ascendancy is relative, not positive. Measures which disproportionately exalt a rival, impair it, as well as those which directly diminish our own strength. It was their duty carefully to inquire, not only whether the measure before them might not tend to injure our own marine, but whether it might not tend, in a disproportionate degree, to afford a stimulus to that of rival States, which might at any time become our foes. It appeared, that under the reciprocity treaty with Prussia, concluded by Mr. Huskisson, the tonnage of that country had increased in a sevenfold proportion as compared with British tonnage. For his part, he was anxious to see all nations prosper; but whenever the interests of other countries might come into collision with those of England, he should give a preference to the interests of his own country. He believed that our maritime superiority had enabled us to confer important benefits on mankind at large. It had enabled us to open to all nations the trade of the East, and had thus become a powerful instrument for the advancement of the happiness and civilisation of man. Some hon. Gentlemen had attempted to prove that no intimate relation subsisted between our commercial marine and our Royal Navy, or at least that the dependence between them was not so great as was commonly supposed. In the Committee which had been moved for by the hon. Member for Stoke-upon-Trent (Mr. Ricardo), the only witness examined upon that subject was Sir James Stirling. Now that fact afforded a striking proof of the hasty manner in which they were called upon to deal with one of the most important questions that could occupy their consideration. There had been only one naval officer examined on the point to which he had referred. And who was that naval officer? He understood that he was an officer of great eminence and of distinguished character in his profession; but he had been assured that he was also one of those who had on that particular subject a sort of pet project. The principal feature of that project was, that by having a larger peace establishment we should render the Royal Navy independent of the aid of the commercial marine. It appeared to him that the fallacy of that position was evident at first sight. Sir J. Stirling had not taken into consideration the necessity which must often arise in case of a sudden war of a large and immediate augmentation of our naval force. How could it be said that they had 70,000 or 80,000 landsmen, who would be prepared at once to co-operate with ablebodied seamen to carry out their naval operations? In point of fact, it would be found that when such inexperienced persons were sent to sea they could do at first little more than vomit. The mercantile marine in time of war must be their great reliance for the manning of their Navy. This body was, as it were, a great national guard, always ready for the defence of the commerce and the liberties of the country. The scheme of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxford (Mr. Gladstone) was quite independent of the plan of the Government, and was of such a character that he thought his right hon. Friend opposite (Mr. Labouchere) could hardly look to the right hon. Gentleman for support in the future stages of this measure. If he were to express a choice of either alternative, he should be disposed to give a preference to the plan brought forward by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford. Their coasting trade would incur a great risk by the adoption of this measure. It required vessels of small burden, drawing little water, and which could be managed with few hands, to carry on this trade effectually. The Dutch galliots were peculiarly adapted to our coasting trade, and would, therefore, come into serious competition with our vessels, if permitted to enter, inasmuch as our vessels were sharper built, and required a larger draught of water. Here then was an obvious difference between these two countries in respect to this trade—such a difference as would tell seriously against us in the race of competition. It appeared to him that nothing could be more absurd than to give all those advantages which this country now enjoyed to other States, without the possibility of receiving any compensation from them in return. He regretted exceedingly that this, too, should be the time chosen by the Ministers for the introduction of a measure of this importance, the results of which were, after all, so problematical. He was well aware that a Ministry now-a-days could not well go through the Session without some pet measure, to serve as a sort of rallying point for their party. If Her Majesty's Ministers could have foreseen the events of the last three months, he did not think that they would ever have chosen this particular period for the introduction of a measure of such a speculative character, in the face of that general confusion in which all Europe was involved. At such a moment as this, were they to be permitted to indulge in such rash and untried theories? He scarcely thought that the Government would have ventured upon such a course now, but that they felt themselves hampered by the expressions which they had used in the Queen's Speech. The recent revolutions had changed the whole aspect of Europe. The risk of war, which had heretofore been considered so remote as to be scarcely worth contemplating, must now be ever present to our thoughts. Where were those Utopian theories which they had heard so often urged, that war was entirely banished from the globe, inasmuch as mankind were becoming too wise and too enlightened to terminate their disputes by a recourse to war?—were those theories proved to have been built on a good foundation? On the contrary, had they not been vanishing away into air? Had they not received sufficient evidence to convince them that they must always rely upon their military and naval forces for the defence and the independence of this country? He trusted that this would not be the period when the House would be found disposed to sanction these experiments, which he thought would peril the interests of Great Britain. He trusted that they should always be prepared to defend that power which was the foundation of the strength of this country, and that they would not suffer to be filched from their grasp by any legislative enactment that trident of the ocean which had been so truly called the sceptre of the world.

MR. MACGREGOR felt assured that the arguments which had been adduced against this proposal of the Government were at variance with all experience. Hon. Gentlemen had said, if the resolutions received the sanction of Parliament, the immediate consequence would be utter ruin to the shipping interests, and to the maritime power of this country. He had not the slightest doubt as to the error of such a prophecy. He had more scepticism as to the sagacity of those who indulged in such a prediction, than as to its being fulfilled. He had endeavoured to ascertain the leading and prominent facts as to the shipping interests of this and other countries; and he was satisfied that the result as regarded this country could not be such as had been described. He was satisfied, if the measure of his right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade received the sanction of Parliament, that it, in connexion with the measures of free trade carried by the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel), would produce such effects as to render the ports, the docks, and the warehouses of the United Kingdom the greatest emporiums which ever existed of the produce of the whole world. The connexion between the present prosperity of our commerce and the navigation laws was most remote, and had as much to do with each other as the Nile had to do with the Pyramids of Egypt. As for the assertion, that the greatness of our Navy was owing to the existence of the navigation laws, he begged the House to remember that our Navy was the most powerful in the world long before those laws were enacted; and he believed it would been have just as powerful if those laws had never been carried. He would not go back to the time of Alfred; but in the time of Edward III. it was well known that our fleet took or destroyed 400 ships with 30,000 men on board. In 1416 also, the Earl of Warwick destroyed a powerful fleet on the coast of Holland. In 1545 also, Sir Edward Howard defeated the French fleet in the Channel with very great loss. He would not refer to the Spanish armada, and to other well-known occasions when our fleet manifested its prowess; but he might observe that up to 1653, our fleet was almost uniformly victorious. It should be recollected the navigation laws were proposed by Oliver Cromwell in 1651. About that period we were continually at war with the Dutch; and it was impossible the navigation laws could have aided in any way in the support of our Navy. There were many countries which never had any navigation laws at any period of their history. When the people of Holland were driven into the country they now occupied, and which then might almost be said to be floating in water, they proceeded to erect cities which became hives of industry and wealth, and that country of marsh and bog became a great mercantile nation in the absence of all navigation laws; and that country also had produced some of the greatest statesmen, philosophers, and men of science and learning in Europe. They had such a powerful fleet without any navigation laws, that it swept the tyrants which oppressed them from the ocean, and ultimately they became almost the first maritime Power in the world. So it was with Denmark and Sweden, whose commercial navies were in a flourishing condition. It appeared also in other instances, the mercantile navies of other countries began to decay shortly after passing the navigation laws and the imposing restrictions. Spain had more stringent navigation laws than any country in the world; and notwithstanding that country received the wealth of Mexico and Peru, it gradually went to decay, and its treasury was generally the poorest of any State in Europe. Holland, notwithstanding the difficulties it had constantly to contend with, was stronger than Spain and Portugal together. He did not believe that we should suffer in the slightest degree in our shipping interest if we abolished the navigation and registry laws altogether. Since 1840 also, with the exception of France, and excluding some few articles in the Prussian tariff, there had been a general relaxation of the system of restriction. The tariff of America had been reduced one-half, and similar changes had been made in other countries. In the Italian States, such as Tuscany, Rome, and Sardinia, great modifications of the tariff had taken place. Austria also since 1838 had not only met us most fairly, but had gone to the extent of abolishing the whole of the prohibitory system of Maria Theresa and Joseph II. Austria, also, at the instigation of England, had relaxed the quarantine laws to one half their former extent; and since then other steps had been taken to reduce these restrictions, so that they would in a short time exist only to one quarter the extent which they formerly did. He believed also, if this measure passed, that, in addition to the reduction which had already taken place in the charges on our ships in the ports of Russia, Sweden, and Norway, and to a certain extent in the ports of Denmark, those States would follow the example which we had set them. He would not go into detail on the present occasion, but should reserve himself until they got into Committee. He would now only refer to what had occurred between this country and the United States in 1782, when General Washington was President, and Mr. Jay, Secretary of State of that country. Washington sent Mr. Adams to this country, to propose to the Government of England that vessels from the United States should be regarded as British ships, and mutual concessions were to be made as regarded navigation and commerce. The proposal was received with approbation, and Mr. Pitt, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, under the Government of Lord Shelborne, announced his intention of obtaining the sanction of Parliament; but being defeated in the debate on the Peace, the Government resigned, and the proposition fell to the ground. So matters rested until 1805, when measures of retaliation were adopted by the United States. He contended, if ever there was a moment for bringing forward such a measure as the present, this was the time, when the Government of the United States were prepared to meet us in every way which we could desire. If this country and the United States adopted unrestricted principles of navigation and trade, every other country would be compelled to follow our example; not from any attachment to this country or the United States, but from the stern laws of necessity they must do so, if they did not wish to see their finances ruined. He should give his cordial support to this measure, as the representative of a place which, next to London, was most deeply interested in shipbuilding and shipping of the highest character; and he believed his constituents would not be injured, or have any reason to complain at being exposed to fair competition with the ships of the whole world. It should also be remembered, that the materials for the construction of ships could be as cheaply obtained here as in any other country. They had been told that this country, in this respect, could not compete with the Northern States of Europe, as the wages of artificers were there so much lower. This, however, would not prevent successful competition on our part, for although wages were nominally cheaper, money was much dearer and more difficult to be got than here. He believed nothing could be more injurious to the shipping interest than the retaining the navigation laws. In 1813 great complaints were made on the proposal to admit Indian-built ships into our ports on the same terms as British ships; and they were told that the consequence would be that all the shipbuilding yards on the Thames and other rivers would be closed, as ships could be built in India at a very cheap rate. This was distinctly stated to be the case by Mr. Harrison, the counsel for the shipbuilders of London, before the Committee of the whole House, on the renewal of the Charter of the East India Company. It appeared from the result, that these predictions were altogether erroneous; for it appeared from the report of the shipbuilders of Calcutta and Bombay for 1847, that the shipbuilders of these ports declared that they could not contend against the splendid ships sent out from England, such as the *Queen*, the *Maria Somes*, the *Africane*, and a great number of other vessels built on the Thames, the Mersey, and the Clyde. He thought that other measures besides the resolutions under consideration were necessary. He believed that the whole of the customs duties should be altered, and that they should make regulations with regard to the masters of ships. He also agreed with the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford, that no duty should be charged upon timber used for shipbuilding. Indeed he (Mr. M'Gregor) wished to see the timber duties abolished altogether; but that could not be done at present with due regard to the public treasury. The opening of the coasting trade to foreigners, he thought, would have an injurious effect upon the revenue, although it would not injure or endanger the shipping interest. But it would endanger the revenue, in consequence of the great inducements that would be held out to smuggling. As to the arguments which had been urged against the measure on the ground that it would prevent the proper manning of the Royal Navy, he need only say, that by the present rule of proportion of British subjects in the crews of British vessels, there might be 35,000 or 36,000 foreigners in our Navy, whereas the fact was, there were not more than 3,500.

MR. MILES had listened to the speech of the hon. Member for Glasgow very attentively, in hope of hearing some argument from that hon. Gentleman, which should appear at least to justify him, and that section of the House with which he was acting in concert, in the course they were pursuing. But he should confess he felt great disappointment. The hon. Member for Glasgow would excuse him if he declined going on the journey to which he had invited him, to Grand Cairo and Suez; and if he refrained from going back to the reign of Alfred the Great, or to the condition of the Navy from the reign of Edward III. to the Commonwealth. He (Mr. Miles) had heard no convincing argument used throughout the entire debate in favour of the proposed alteration in the navigation laws. It had, indeed, been urged that owing to the extension of intelligence and to the progress of the people, it had become necessary to extend the means of commerce, and to remove restrictions upon trade. But, excepting in the year 1846, he had never heard the slightest complaint of the want of freight from foreign ports; and, at all events, he thought the preference should be given to British bottoms. As it seemed to be agreed on all hands that details should be reserved for Committee, he would only touch generally upon the matters which had been presented for their consideration; and, after the many and various reasons that had been adduced by those hon. Gentlemen who supported the resolutions, he thought they ought, if they had really nothing to fear from competition, as they alleged, to propose the doing away altogether with the navigation laws at once. But the fact was, there was great difficulty in arguing the question under the circumstances at present existing, They had had a Committee of their House. which had sat for a length of time, had received a great deal of evidence, and had come to no decision after all. They examined but one naval captain amongst all their witnesses, and had come to no result. A Committee of the House of Lords was now sitting; and from the proceedings of that Committee they had obtained in some degree some means of refuting what had been stated before the Committee of the House of Commons. Much stress had been laid upon the testimony given by Sir J. Stirling; but, as he should have a good deal to say upon that subject, he should first address himself to the question of cost of shipbuilding. He should found his arguments on that head upon the evidence of an English gentleman who had been brought up to the sea—who had been impressed into the Royal Navy—who had served in his youth in the merchant service—and who was well acquainted with the north of Europe trade especially. He meant Mr. Whitworth. It would be as well to state that Mr. Whitworth was now a shipbroker at Bristol, and that he had frequently sailed to the various Danish and Norwegian ports. That gentleman stated, with tears in his eyes, what were his feelings as an old British seaman, and that he could not reflect without regret upon the great injustice they were about to inflict upon British seamen. From his evidence as to the cost of shipbuilding and outfitting, ready for sea, it appeared that a ship of 500 tons copper-fastened, built in Norway and coppered in this country, and a British ship of the same tonnage, built, coppered, and copper-fastened in this country, would bear the following relative proportions. The Norwegian vessel would cost 4,000*l.*; add her coppering, 500*l.* : total, 4,500*l.* or about 8*l.* a ton. The English ship would cost about 16*l.*, or from that to 20*l.* a ton—consequently about 9,000*l.*, exactly one half more; or rather exactly double what the Norwegian ships would cost. How, then, was it possible that the proposed plan could help having an injurious effect upon the shipbuilding interest, by throwing out of employment a vast number of shipwrights and artisans? Let them next see what was the comparative condition of the crews. English rates of wages—captains, 10*l.* a month; mates, 5*l.*; second mates and carpenters, 3*l.* 10*s.* to 4*l.*; sailors, 2*l.* 10*s.* a month. He should observe that he was stating the lowest prices of British wages, and he was about to give the highest rates of Danish. The Danish captains had about as much, if not rather more wages than English; but Danish mates had from 2*l.* to 2*l.* 5*s.* a month, second mates and carpenters, 1*l.* 12*s.* to 1*l.* 15*s.*; and common sailors, 1*l.* 8*s.* to 1*l.* 10*s.* a month. The cabin allowances on board British ships were, for common sailors, 1*s.* to 1*s.* 2*d.* a head; on board Danish they were only 7*d.* In the officers' cabin a similar disproportion existed. So that the entire wages of the British vessel amounted to 72*l.* 10*s.* per month, whilst the wages of the Danish were only 44*l.* 15*s.*, being a saving of a difference of 27*l.* 15*s.* The cost of provisions on board the British vessel was 36*l.* 8*s.* for the twenty-eight days; on the Norwegian it was only 21*l.* 19*s.* 8*d.*; so that so far as cost of victualling and wages went, the odds were all in favour of the Dane, to the amount of no less a sum than 42*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.* a month. As to American ships, they would cost very little less than English, whilst the payment on board American vessels was higher than on English. The hon. Member for Inverness-shire (Mr. Baillie), when addressing the House, had stated that the only part of the globe in which the English and American navies came into fair and open competition, was in the South Sea. Now, if that were so, he (Mr. Miles) was sorry to say that the effect had been, that in that trade, which of all others made the best seamen, the British had dwindled down to nothing, whilst the Americans had no less than 17,000 seamen engaged in it. In 1820 the bounties that were paid on every vessel fitted out for the South Sea whale fishery were reduced, and high duties were put on. In 1842 the duties were lowered. In 1846 they were lowered still further, until, he believed, the 1st of January, next year, they were to sink down to nothing. But the Americans had high protecting duties, and they did all they could to foster their trade. The hon. Gentleman then read several extracts of letters from captains of vessels trading to Calcutta, and from mercantile firms in India and at Bordeaux, to show that French vessels were likely to absorb a large portion of the long-voyage trade from Bristol, and that the British trade with India was nearly destroyed by the new custom-house regulations at Calcutta. But the effect of the proposed measures upon the manning of the Royal Navy in time of war, was the main question. Heaven knew, the complaints made by people of all descriptions within the last two or three years, had been little regarded by the Legislature. The complaints of the agriculturists had been disregarded, so had the complaints of the mercantile classes; and it would, therefore, be little wonder if they disregarded the prayer of the shipowners. But let them see what the mercantile men had done in manning the Royal Navy, and in defending this island from foreign invaders. What was their condition now? It was stated by Sir J. Stirling, that of 46,000 men who were in the Navy, there were not above 10,000 ablebodied seamen. Suppose, then, that a war were to break out suddenly. Suppose they had war tomorrow, and that there were no registry to point out where they had their 250,000 seamen, he wished to know what they would do? He wished that all they had heard in the course of the debate to the derogation of British seamen had not been said. Sir J. Stirling had said that nothing could be finer than the character of those men who were engaged in the long-voyage trade. And notwithstanding what the noble Lord opposite (Lord John Hay) had said about the conduct of the seamen in Spain, he had no doubt the noble and gallant Lord would be willing and happy to go into action with a crew of such men. He would answer for it, the noble and gallant Lord would be happy, on an emergency, to take a crew of them. [Lord JOHN HAY dissented.] The noble Lord said no; but he believed, after all, those men would do their duty gallantly. To proceed to the question of the coasting trade, Sir J. Stirling had said, that—

> "If protection were to be given to any branch of our shipping trade, it ought to be to that; but that he doubted whether the navigation laws gave any protection at all. He did not think that foreigners could compete with Englishmen in their marine."

Where were the petitions in favour of this measure? In the absence of any expression of public opinion in support of it, let them not tell him that it was looked upon with favour by the commercial classes of the country. Having stated this much, and thanking the House for the attention with which they had listened to him, he begged to say in conclusion, that he should be very happy to give his support to the Amendment of his right hon. Friend the Member for Stamford.

MR. MOODY confessed that, having heard such a variety of opinions expressed on this subject, he should not be surprised to hear any view whatever with regard to it supported by hon. Members. After having listened to all the arguments that had been adduced on both sides, he felt bound to give his vote in favour of the original Motion in preference to the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stamford. It appeared to him (Mr. Moody) that if the whole of the restrictions imposed by the navigation laws continued, there could not be any effective working out of the commercial measures of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth; but at the same time, he felt that they were quite at sea as to what the effect of the proposed alterations would be. They had heard the most diametrically opposite views expressed with regard to them by hon. Gentlemen who ought to have been able to form a sound judgment upon such a subject. Looking to statistics, they had the right hon. President of the Board of Trade founding his arguments in support of his proposition on statistics, while other hon. and right hon. Gentlemen made use of the same statistics to controvert the right hon. Gentleman's views. They would probably have some other hon. or right hon. Members this evening taking other totally different views. Looking at the state of opinion out of doors, he saw no more satisfactory means at arriving at the truth. From the port of London they had one lengthy petition, signed by a great number of gentlemen of much practical experience, in favour of the measure; but then they had another petition from the same quarter, of equal weight and respectability, against any alteration whatever in the navigation laws. They had in other petitions laid before the House on the subject, quite enough to bewilder any person who had not been engaged in mercantile pursuits, and who was not thus able to perceive how the measure would affect his own interests. Under these circumstances, he feared that it was very difficult for any hon. Member unacquainted practically with the subject to form a correct view upon matters of this kind; and he thought that was one reason why they ought to let the measure go forward, in order that the details might be considered with more care in Committee. He did not wish to delay the House, but he would beg to observe that there was one other reason which influenced him in giving his vote in favour of the original Motion. The House unfortunately presented very great divisions on both sides. There could be no doubt, therefore, but that some hon. Gentleman on his side of the House would go over to vote in favour of the Government, while other hon. Members would be found coming across from the Ministerial side to vote on that—he was going to say the Opposition side of the House, but the House was so divided that it was difficult to say where the Opposition now sat. Some hon. Members who had entered the House as free-traders, now found influential portions of their constituency crying out to them that the craft was in danger; and he should be sorry to see the difficulties thus created increased by adverse decisions of the House, and Her Majesty's Government embarrassed by such a variety of opposition. In conclusion, he begged to guard himself by observing that, in supporting the Motion for going into Committee, he did not consider himself as pledged to support all the details of the Bill.

Sir G. CLERK would support the Motion that the Speaker leave the chair for going into Committee to consider the present state of the navigation laws, and their effect upon the trade and commerce of the country. He was a Member of the Committee of that House which, during the last Session, sat on this important question; and the effect of the evidence on his mind was, that extensive changes and alterations should be made in the existing system of the navigation laws. If he were to vote for the Amendment, it would be equivalent to a declaration of opinion that there was nothing in the present state of the law which rendered it necessary to go into inquiry on that important point. He knew that his right hon. Friend (Mr. Herries) was not prepared to say that those laws required no alteration. He (Sir G. Clerk) believed that many hon. Gentlemen who would support the Amendment were not prepared to maintain the navigation laws as they stood at present. He thought the practical effect of carrying the Amendment would be to lead the country to think that it was the opinion of the House that no alteration should be made in those laws. Those who opposed the original Motion argued that those laws had for two centuries remained unchanged—that they had been the preservation of our country's greatness, and the cause of our naval supremacy. The real effects produced upon our system of navigation laws were to be found in the changes which had from time to time been necessary, in consequence of the altered state of our relations with the other nations of the world; such as the immense changes consequent upon the Declaration of Independence of the United States in 1783, the Declaration of the South American Colonies of Spain, &c. All these changes had rendered it incumbent upon us to take a different view of the question of navigation law. In addition to that, our increased intercourse with the other nations of Europe, had rendered great changes absolutely necessary. According to a law which was originally introduced in the time of Charles II., all trade was prohibited with this country in foreign ships, unless the ships were of the same country as the goods which they carried. But since 1825 most important changes had been made in the law. The old restriction was then taken off a great number of articles, although he must say that the list of favoured articles was most arbitrarily chosen. Any hon. Member who would take the trouble to inspect that list would find that whilst several articles of vast importance were admitted to be imported without restriction, there were some of the most unimportant articles on which the old fetters were still allowed to remain. For instance, we took very great care that no figs should be introduced into this country except in British vessels, or vessels belonging to the country in which those figs were grown; but with regard to metals, with regard to our importations of pig iron, amounting to 34,000 tons in the course of the year, there were no restrictions whatever. Any vessel might import iron, or any metallic ores, or any metals, without reference to the country to which she belonged. the manner in which she was navigated, or the port from which she came. We took very good care to enforce the law of restrictions with regard to the importation of barilla, of which there arrived about 1,500 tons in the course of the year; but, with regard to butter, of which we imported ten times as much, or 15,000 tons in the course of the year, any ship might bring butter into this country free from all restriction; and that was the case with regard to many other articles which he might enumerate. He was sorry to hear the statement of the hon. Member for Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) the other night with regard to the measures of Mr. Huskisson on the navigation laws. He (Sir G. Clerk) believed that the rapid increase and prosperity of the trade of this country during the last few years were to be attributed in a great degree to the alterations effected in the navigation laws by Mr. Huskisson in 1825. And when he considered the glowing anticipations that were entertained at that time with regard to Mr. Huskisson's measures as to what would be their probable effects, he confessed that there was no circumstance which relieved him more from the apprehensions which one might be disposed to entertain regarding the present proposed change in the navigation laws, than the eminent success of the changes effected by Mr. Huskisson in 1825. He believed that there was no person in this country (however much he might have been disposed hitherto to attribute the occasional depressions which our shipping interest had suffered to the reciprocity treaties of 1824), who would for one moment recommend the House to retrace its steps, and reimpose upon foreigners those alien duties to which they were formerly subjected. Indeed, he believed, from the discussions which had taken place on this subject, that he might take for granted that every one admitted that it was to the operation of the changes introduced by Mr. Huskisson in 1825, that we must attribute the rapid rise and prosperity of English trade. And, looking to the importance of our trade with Asia, Africa, and America, he must say that it was impossible for us any longer to permit the present restrictive laws on navigation to remain on the Statute-book. He did not think that, with regard to that part of the subject, the necessity of an alteration in our law with regard to our trade with Asia, Africa, and America, there would be found one dissentient voice in the House. He had not heard any one say that it was not expedient that a very great change should take place in our law in that respect; that, in fact, the law with regard to our trade with Asia, Africa, and America, should be put upon the same footing as that which regulated our European trade. But those who made that admission stated, at the same time, that they entertained the most serious apprehension that if those restrictions were taken off, we should throw into the hands of foreigners the greatest share of what was called "the long-voyage" trade with this country. Now, he thought it was necessary to inquire upon what foundation that apprehension rested. They had had several detailed calculations with regard to the comparative cost of building ships, rate of wages, expense of navigating, &c. in Great Britain and abroad; but they ought to look at what had been the experience of British shipowners, &c. for a long series of years with regard to the particular branches of trade in which they had been exposed to a free and open competition with foreign countries, and particularly with those Northern States, with respect to whom he was surprised to find, in certain quarters, the greatest alarm and jealousy entertained. Certain parties said that if this proposed alteration were carried into effect, those Northern States would become our most formidable rivals, and would materially injure the shipping interests of this country. We had for a long while been on equal terms with Russia with regard to navigation laws, and we imported into Russia not only the manufactures of Great Britain, but also articles from every other part of the globe. He contended that this question of the Russian trade showed the groundlessness of the alarms entertained by certain parties with regard to the "long voyage" trade. That single fact ought at once to remove their apprehensions. As the law now stood, goods the produce of Asia, Africa, and America, might be brought into this country in the ships of any nation, if they were not intended for consumption in this country, but were to be warehoused for exportation. And was it not self-evident that if any other country could have carried on that trade at a cheaper rate than Great Britain, such a country must have monopolised the whole of that trade. If the Danish, the Swedish, or the Prussian vessels, of which some persons were so much afraid, could have carried on that trade in any large branch —in sugar, for instance, from Brazil or Cuba—with advantage to themselves, and more cheaply than British vessels; then, indeed, British shipowners would have been obliged to allow foreigners to monopolise that trade, even as regarded sugar imported into British ports for home consumption. But the truth was, that not only was the sugar used in this country conveyed hither by English bottoms, but even that which was consumed in Russia and various other countries was carried by British vessels. Then, he would ask, what injurious effect, up to the present moment, had our law which placed the Northern States on the same footing as ourselves? He found that a large part of the goods imported from Brazil into the ports of the Mediterranean was carried by British vessels. With respect to that trade, foreigners, to say the least, had an equal chance with ourselves. If foreigners could indeed navigate their ships so much more cheaply than ourselves, why was it that, up to the present moment, we had absorbed so much of the shipping trade, even in their own seas? By the official returns it appeared that the amount of tonnage which entered the Baltic in 1844, exceeded 800,000, which was nearly one-third of the whole of the shipping trade of the Baltic. Now, that fact might certainly have relieved the minds of those persons who entertained such great alarm for the safety of British shippers from the invasion of foreigners. He had shown that where British shipowners had come into competition with Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, &c., shipowners, the former had come off victorious.

It was said by some that foreign sailors were fed on a very coarse description of bread, &c., and that, from that and other circumstances, British shippers would have to yield if put into competition with foreigners on equal terms. But the evidence which was given before the Navigation Committee might have set any fears on that ground at rest. A specimen of the rations served out in the ships of foreigners was exhibited in the Committee, and he would venture to say that there were many merchant ships in this country in which the provision was neither superior in quality nor equal in quantity; and with regard to the Prussian ships, the allowance of beef and pork was greater than in English vessels. One of the witnesses that was examined before the Committee appointed to inquire into the depressed state of the shipping interest of this country, in 1844, admitted that, owing to the facilities which had been granted to the masters of ships to get provisions of any kind out of bond, for the purposes of victualling their ships, the actual cost of navigating the ships of this country had been reduced 30 per cent. Therefore, taking into account the fact of our tariff having been reduced, whereby the articles required in the victualling of ships had been considerably cheapened—and taking into account the alteration in the duties upon all raw materials necessary for the construction of ships—taking into account the slight difference between the expense of building a ship in Norway, Sweden, or Denmark, and the expense in Great Britain—taking into account the superior quality of the material used in the construction of our ships, and the consequent greater durability of them (our ships lasted double the time of foreign ships);—they might safely say that, taking quality for quality, the ships of this country could be built and navigated as cheaply as in any other part of Europe. And he begged leave to ask the House, was it from a small commercial State such as Bremen, Norway, Denmark, or Prussia, that this country was to entertain any alarm? Were they afraid of the rivalry of the commercial or military marines of such countries as those? No; they must look to another quarter of the globe if they were to look for that power, energy, and enterprise, which were to become formidable rivals to this nation. We must look to the United States, a people of the same blood as ourselves. And could ships be built or navigated by them more cheaply than by ourselves? Why, he found that the ordinary wages of a shipwright at New York were two dollars, or 8*s.* 4*d.* a day—a higher rate of wages than was usually paid in the most extensive shipbuilding houses along the river Thames. And, last year, owing to a greater demand for ships, 10*s.* a day were actually paid by the same shipbuilders in America. Now, under such circumstances, he would ask whether it was possible to build ships cheaper at New York, Baltimore, or Boston, than at Liverpool, or any other British port? On this subject he would refer them to the evidence of an American captain, as given in the report of the Navigation Laws Committee, who stated that he could repair his ship more cheaply at Liverpool than at New York. And as to the wages, &c. of American seamen, it must be evident that the hundreds of seamen who had left our vessels to go into the American service must have been induced to make the change from the higher recompense held out to them. The wages of able seamen at New York were fifteen dollars a month; and, taking a dollar at the lowest calculation, the American sailor would receive 3*l.* 4*s.* per month, whilst able seamen in England could be obtained for 2*l.* 10*s.* And with regard to the materials used in the construction of the best American ships, a portion had actually to be purchased in England. So much with regard to the fears to be entertained from our most formidable rival. But, laying aside these considerations as to the comparative cost of constructing and navigating British and foreign vessels, the greatest "rival" that they had to fear was the superior conduct of foreign captains and sailors to our own. The superior intelligence, sobriety, and courtesy of foreign captains, induced many of even our own merchants, against their will, to employ foreign shipowners in the transit of their goods. Of that they had abundant and painful evidence in the report of the Navigation Laws Committee. Here he must briefly refer to the correspondence of our consuls, in consequence of the severe animadversions of the hon. Member for Oxfordshire, a few nights ago, and the wish expressed by the right hon. President of the Board of Trade that that hon. Member would read the date of a letter he referred to, in order to fix the blame, if any, upon the late Government. But the fact was, that the late Government were not responsible at all for the communications between

Mr. Murray and some of the foreign consuls. Mr. Murray had acted of his own Motion, and had sent the result of some inquiries he had made to his superior in office, Lord Canning, for the information of the Government; but Mr. Murray himself said that he had addressed "private letters to several consuls with whom he was personally acquainted." The late Government were not answerable for the terms of Mr. Murray's communications; and if there was any blame at all it rested not with the late, but rather with the present Government, who had laid the papers upon the table without any qualification or explanation. The evidence before the Committee with respect to the education and manners of the masters of our merchant vessels, proceeded from some of the greatest shipowners—men greatly desirous of protection, and who were in fact unwilling witnesses; and it was impossible to look at that evidence without being much struck with its nature. Refraining from quoting the testimony of Captain Fitzroy, who might perhaps be challenged as a prejudiced witness, he would first call the attention of the House to the evidence of the agent to the underwriters of Glasgow, who deposed to the number of ships he had known to have got on shore, owing to the ignorance, carelessness, stupidity, or want of education of the masters. The next important evidence was that of the greatest shipowner in the country, and a stanch Protectionist; he meant Mr. Somes. That gentleman said that thirty years ago the masters of English vessels maintained a great superiority compared with foreigners; but that superiority existed no longer, and the foreign masters were quite equal—Mr. Somes would not admit that they were superior—to the English. Mr. Somes was asked whether preference was not given to masters of foreign vessels, on account of the greater care they took of the cargoes; and he answered that he had seen great neglect in some cases on the part of English captains in respect to the care of their cargo. That was a very important admission as coming from Mr. Somes. The same gentleman also declared that the Prussian sailors were a superior class, and that their commanders were well instructed in navigation. He would only quote from the evidence of one more witness, Mr. Wilcox, managing director of the Oriental Steam-packet Company, who admitted that preference was given to foreign masters. This was a most important part of the case, because if competition was really to be dreaded, let the true source and cause be discovered. Mr. Wilcox further said, that foreign masters were superior in their address to the English—a fact which told very much abroad. The English captains were not equal to the others in civility and courteousness of manner, and that was a ground for preference. At the close of the war British captains had been preferred, but that *prestige* was now gone. That was the evidence of Mr. Wilcox; and another witness said, "Foreign masters were preferred because they were better conducted and steady men." Such evidence showed the effect of monopoly in this instance; and he (Sir G. Clerk) believed that in all other cases similar effects would follow. At the end of the war we had all the carrying trade in the world; foreigners had to create a commercial navy, and they bestowed great pains upon it, and they introduced a system of education for masters and mates, whilst we remained with our arms crossed. He did not say that we made no progress; he did not say that we were worse now than we were thirty years ago; we were making slow progress, but foreigners who could not compete with us thirty years ago, by means of a better system of educating their masters and mates, had so improved them, that when British and foreign vessels met in a foreign port, the preference was given to the foreigner at an equal rate of freight, on account of the greater care which the masters took of the cargo. Was this a prejudice confined to foreign countries? He was sorry to say that it was a feeling participated in by British merchants. Messrs. Gladstone and Co. had given instructions to their agents at Rio to ship their goods aboard foreign vessels, as the masters would take more care of them than our own masters; and he (Sir G. Clerk) believed that similar directions had been given by other houses at Liverpool. With respect to the quickness of voyage, Captain Briggs said a preference was given to American vessels on this account. The masters had an interest in the vessel; and in order to make quick voyages they found it necessary to obtain a better knowledge of the currents of the ocean; and in a note appended to the consular returns it was stated by Mr. Murray, that the master of an English vessel, by his scientific knowledge, had been able, through his acquaintance with the currents, to perform a voyage from this country to New Zealand in ninety days, and the homeward voyage in ninety-one days. It was most important to the merchant that his cargo should arrive at the shortest possible period, and he would naturally choose the quickest means of conveyance. Sailing vessels had now to compete with the power of steam, and were obliged to employ the greatest exertions. The late Government attempted to remedy the evil of the want of education for our masters and mates; they instituted a system for the examination of persons for these situations, in order that they might possess some scientific knowledge as well as practical seamanship. In 1845, with the able assistance of Sir G. Cockburn, then a Lord of the Admiralty, he (Sir G. Clerk) drew up a scheme for the examination of masters and mates before competent authorities at the outports, where they were to receive certificates. That scheme had not been carried out to the extent he wished; but he was happy to say that, during the last year, there had been a great increase in the number of masters and mates who had tendered themselves for examination; and it must be borne in mind that the discipline of the crews depended upon the character of the masters. The best crew would be spoiled if placed under the command of a negligent and intemperate master, who treated them in a coarse or harsh manner. He had endeavoured briefly to show that, looking at the experience we had had in trade, we were able to compete with the ships of foreign countries, and that our foreign trade had increased quite as much as our colonial trade, which was confined to our own ships. This appeared from the amount of our trade in 1844 and 1846, comparing the protected (our colonial trade) and the unprotected, or foreign trade. Some observations had been made with reference to those returns upon an able and zealous public servant, Mr. Porter, as if he had prepared unfair returns, calculated to make erroneous impressions. He did not attach much value to those returns; but whatever their value might be, or their unfairness, the fault was not Mr. Porter's; the returns were not so framed by him, but by Mr. George Frederick Young. [Mr. HERRIES dissented.] Mr. Young had acknowledged, in his evidence, that he had prepared those returns up to 1844; and all that had been done by Mr. Porter, was the bringing the returns down, prepared on the same principle, to 1846. The hon. Member for Bucks (Mr. Disraeli) had just asked, "Who is Mr. Young?" He should have supposed that the hon. Gentleman had not been ignorant of who Mr. Young was; he had supposed the hon. Member had been in communication with him; he was President of the Committee of Shipowners, and formerly a Member of that House—a man of great acuteness and ability. He thought, therefore, that Mr. Porter had been unfairly attacked. He had endeavoured to show that there was no very great reason to apprehend danger from competition with foreigners; that we had advantages which would enable us, if we threw open the trade with foreign countries, to keep our share not only of the direct trade, but even of the indirect trade. But it might be said, why change at all? He thought it would be easy to show that the navigation laws had not been effectual for the object for which they were enacted, and that they placed us in a position of disadvantage. The navigation laws had been enacted on account of the jealousy entertained by this country, two centuries ago, towards Holland; the commercial marine of most other nations was then in a state of infancy. But see what had been the effect of our navigation laws. They had forced and extended the commercial marine of those countries, and principally those countries whence we imported the largest amount of raw produce. The United States now had navigation laws; and we stood now in an analogous position with regard to the United States as Holland, 200 years ago, did with us. But Great Britain being the emporium of the world, we ought to be ready to import and export the produce of every part of the globe, without restriction. The Americans said, their goods should be brought in American vessels only. What was the consequence? Look, in the first place, to the import trade of America with this country; and he would quote the figures used by the hon. Member for Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate). Last year there were imported into the ports of England from the United States goods to the value of 42,500,000 dollars, or between 10,000,000*l.* and 11,000,000*l.* sterling. Of this amount the value of 31,000,000 dollars was brought by American vessels, and only 11,000,000 dollars by English ships. This was a very unfair proportion; but look at the return trade. There were exported from England to America goods to the value of 44,000,000 dollars, of which amount 37,500,000 dollars went in American vessels, and only 6,000,000 dollars, or not one-seventh, in English vessels. So that our trade with one of our most important customers was injured by the operation of the navigation laws. Why should vessels from Hamburgh and other places not participate in the trade between this country and America? If it would occasion a displacement of tonnage, it would be only American tonnage. But he denied that there would be any displacement at all. If we removed these disqualifications, the increase in our trade would be in an equal ratio. It had been said that the Americans were so convinced of the advantages they would derive from the combined operation of the English navigation laws and their own navigation laws, that they never would relax theirs. But this was not the opinion of witnesses who had been examined before the Committee. Mr. Dunbar, of Sunderland, Chairman of the Shipowners Society, was opposed to our repealing the navigation laws, because he feared there would be, as far as America was concerned, no reciprocity. He would read a portion of his evidence before the Committee on the Navigation Laws:—

> "How is it then that you consider that a depression will follow from the opening of the trade generally?—Because the repeal of the navigation laws would be no reciprocity; if I had a ship loading in Canton, and an American had a ship there, he would come to London with his teas, but I could not go to New York with mine, therefore there would be no reciprocity. If we had a fair competition upon principles of reciprocity, I should not be so much afraid of it.
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> "If there were a free trade in shipping all over the world, you would have no fear of competition?—I do not say no fear, but not so much fear.
>
> "But would you have any fear?—Yes.
>
> "What amount of fear would you have?—It is almost impossible to say; every competition must injure the shipowner. If I had a ship loading in Canton, alongside of an American, if he could come to London he would reduce my freight; but if I could not go to New York, I could not reduce his; whereas if I could go to New York, I could reduce his as well as he reduce mine.
>
> "In case there was an alteration of the navigation laws of America, you would not object to an open trade?—I would object; I should not like it; but I would not be so much afraid of the competition in that case.
>
> "Do you think that it would be a worse state of things than the present?—I think it would.
>
> "But how is it that you obtain an advantage, because you enjoy a protection in respect of those countries with which you are on fair terms of reciprocity?—We do obtain an advantage; for instance, an American ship cannot go to Canton and bring teas to London, but I can go to Canton and bring teas to London."

He believed, contrary to Mr. Dunbar, that, instead of losing by throwing open the trade between this country and America, upon a balance we should be gainers by it. He knew that there were persons who said that it could not but be injurious to both countries, and that it would be better for the trade of this country and America that the import trade should either be confined to our own ships, or that the ships of this country should go in ballast from America, and the American ships go in ballast from hence to their country. These persons, however, were not likely to make many converts to their doctrines. Many nations of Europe had a much more liberal code of commercial policy than ourselves, and therefore we must look at the notice we had received from Prussia, and consider what would be the effect of the European nations all retaliating upon us by adopting the restrictions which many here considered essential for us to have in force. It was impossible to conceive of more serious injury to the commerce of this country, or anything more utterly destructive of our warehousing system. It might be said that other Powers would themselves suffer by taking such a course; but had we never submitted to a great annoyance ourselves for the sake of inflicting a blow upon our enemies or rivals? On the other hand, the removal of existing impediments would increase the commerce of the world; foreign nations might increase their commercial navy; but it would not be by displacing British ships; the effect of a further relaxation would be similar to that which was now admitted to be the result of Mr. Huskisson's alterations. He freely admitted that whatever advantages might be gained in a commercial point of view from the repeal of those laws, they would be too dearly purchased if such repeal was accompanisd with a diminution of the number of merchant seamen. Nothing, in short, would compensate for such an irreparable injury; for he looked to the mercantile navy of this country as the source whence a supply of men was to be drawn in time of war to man our fleet—a supply which could be had nowhere else unless by constantly keeping up a war establishment; for experience from boyhood was required in order to make a good sailor. The profession of seaman required a longer service than any other. They must, therefore, look to the mercantile marine, which was essential to the preservation of the country itself. By the present law merchant vessels might, in time of war, be manned by one-fourth of their usual number, thus making provision for the manning of the fleet from the merchant service. He had endeavoured to state as briefly as he could, his reasons for the line he took; and would now say a word or two upon another question. He must say that he did not think the House had been fairly treated by the Government, who had upon this subject departed from the usual course upon important measures like the present. The usual course was to lay before the House a series of resolutions, embodying the main principles of the projected alterations, so that the House might consider them in detail, and have the whole question before them in a plain and intelligible form. If that course had been taken, this discussion would have been avoided, as his right hon. Friend the Member for Stamford would at once have gone into Committee. [Lord JOHN RUSSELL: No, no!] He was certain that his right hon. Friend would then have gone into Committee, because there he could have dealt with the propositions in a tangible shape, by affirming, perhaps, the first, negativing the second, modifying the third, and so on. And, indeed, as there was now no hope of making any progress with the measure, at least before the holidays, he thought the Government ought still to adopt the course of laying the propositions before the House. If they had taken this course on the 15th of May, the measure might have had some prospect of being passed; but it was impossible at this period of the year for the Legislature to make any change. He would ask the noble Lord, now that they were about to go into Committee to consider the propriety of introducing a Bill involving so many complicated details in the middle of June, what hope was there of being able to carry it through during the present Session? He, therefore, thought the Government ought to lay the measure now before the House in a series of tangible propositions, which the House and the country would understand much better than when put in the technical form of a Bill. He gathered from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, and from the letter of the noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in reply to Mr. Bancroft, that he was willing to adopt the principle laid down by Mr. Bancroft, that if America conceded little, we were to concede little; if America conceded much, we were to concede much; if America conceded all, we were to concede all. That was, at least, an intelligible proposition; but then, if he understood their plans from the sketch given by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, Government proposed to proceed in a directly opposite course. The right hon. Gentleman proposed, in the first place, to sweep away the whole of the navigation laws, and then to vest in the Crown the power of re-enacting them, at least in so far as to prevent the ships of those countries that would not favour us, from enjoying the benefit of their repeal. That was an extremely inconvenient course; and though the right hon. Gentleman said there were precedents for it, he (Sir G. Clerk) must confess he was not acquainted with them. But he objected to this course, because he thought nothing was more likely to embroil us with foreign countries than such a power being vested in the Crown. This was not the course which Mr. Huskisson followed in 1825, when he established the reciprocity system, though even in establishing that system Mr. Huskisson proved he was trenching somewhat upon constitutional principles; but he defended it on the ground that he was not vesting in the Crown the power of imposing new taxes. That was a very different thing from the course which it was now proposed to pursue, which was first to take off all existing restrictions, and then to give the Crown the power, at its will, of imposing customs duties. His right hon. Friend the Member for the University of Oxford had recommended the sound rule of proceeding in suggesting a more cautious mode of proceeding on the part of the Government, though eventually the same end would be reached—that was, to accomplish their object rather by means of treaties with foreign Governments, than by first repealing the law and then giving the Crown the power of renewing it. It might be said that they had repudiated the principle of reciprocity in revising the tariff. But he considered there was a clear ground of distinction between the two cases. The ships of countries were in the same class —they were *in pari materia*—and, therefore, it would be comparatively easy to allow foreigners privileges, with regard to navigation, on condition that they allowed the same principle to us. But, in the case of the tariff, the articles were of every variety of character—they were articles which were needed for the benefit of the people of this country; therefore we could not wait until foreign countries should agree to admit our goods. He begged pardon of the House for going into so many details; but it was a question on which he had not made up his mind without great difficulty and much distrust of his own opinion. But, after listening to the evidence which had been given before the Committee appointed by this House last Session, and after reading the evidence taken by the Committee of the House of Lords during the present Session, he was satisfied that Parliament might remove the restrictions imposed by the navigation laws, without, in the slightest degree, injuring the shipping of this country, while the trade of the country would be extended, and the English mercantile marine would increase in future as they had increased in the past, and in a far greater ratio than the ships of other countries. On these grounds he had come to the conclusion of voting in favour of the House going into Committee.

MR. CARDWELL said, that the question which the House had now to decide was, not how far it should adopt the proposition of the Government—that question would be submitted on a future day—the question the House was now invited to decide was, whether or not it would consider the laws relating to the navigation of this country? At the commencement of the Session, Her Majesty, in the Speech from the Throne, recommended to Parliament the consideration of those laws; and, in an unanimous address, this House assured Her Majesty that it would take them into its careful consideration with a view to ascertain whether any changes could be effected in them without danger to the maritime strength, or prejudice to the colonial and commercial interests of the empire. Since that time documents had been laid upon the table from two of the most important countries with which we had commercial relations—Prussia and the United States of America, intimating on the part of Prussia, that the advantages which we now enjoyed in Prussian ports would be withdrawn unless we were prepared to give corresponding advantages to Prussia in our ports; and intimating on the part of the United States that they were prepared to make relaxations in favour of our trade, if we, on our part, were prepared to make corresponding relaxations to their advantage here. There had also been laid papers before the House, in the name of several of our most important colonies, beseeching Paliament to consider the grievances under which they alleged themselves to be labouring from the operation of the navigation laws. It was under these circumstances that his right hon. Friend the Member for Stamford interposed an obstacle to the Speaker's leaving the chair, which, would prevent the House from fulfilling its pledge to the Throne by taking the navigation laws into consideration. Upon these grounds alone—if there were no others—he felt it impossible to give a vote for his right hon. Friend's Amendment. If the House would extend its indulgence to him, he would endeavour not to trespass upon its attention for an unreasonable space of time whilst attempting to express an opinion on the difficult and complicated subject of the navigation laws. It was with peculiar satisfaction he observed, that whatever differences of opinion existed amongst parties in that House upon other points—however various were the roads by which they proposed to walk—they were entirely at one in respect to the guide whom they were prepared to follow. The policy of Mr. Huskisson was appealed to, and the success of his measures stated by the hon. Member for Westbury, who supported the proposition of the Government; and a similar course was taken by his right hon. Friend the Member for Stamford, who would not permit the Speaker to leave the chair until he had taken what he conceived to be effectual security for the good behaviour of the House when it should get into Committee. What, then, was the policy of Mr. Huskisson, in whose footsteps the House was invited to walk? The policy of that statesman in 1823 was based, not on theory, but on practical considerations of public exigency. Perceiving the change which had been made by the transition from war to peace, he proposed to obviate the difficulties in which trade and navigation were involved in consequence of foreign nations having determined on retaliating the hostile system which we had established; and he did not hesitate to avow his confident belief that if Mr. Huskisson had lived until the present day, so far from seeing reason to repent the course on which he had entered, he would have been encouraged by the light of experience to go forward in the same direction with greater confidence and a freer step. Nor for a moment could he admit the truth of the assertion that the shipowners, seamen, and others engaged in that branch of British industry, had any true reason to fear any competition in which they might engage on equal terms, provided only it were a real and not a nominal and unsubstantial equality. We were the countrymen of Drake and Raleigh—we descended from the men who carried the enterprise of Great Britain to the most distant parts of the world, and resisted the Spanish armada, and we could not consent to date the maritime supremacy of England from a regulation established by Cromwell, or an Act of Parliament passed in the reign of Charles II. To rest our title to maritime supremacy upon an Act of Parliament, was as irrational as for the Spaniards and Portuguese in former times to found a claim to the exclusive navigation of a portion of the globe upon a bull of the Pope. The elements of maritime success were energy, skill, aptitude for nautical pursuits, and the possession of a large amount of capital. What country possessed those requisites in any degree comparable with our own? Did not the right hon. Member for Stamford, when submitting his Amendment to the House, assert that the proposition of the Government would endanger no less than 60,000,000*l.* of capital invested in the shipping trade? What other country had 60,000,000*l.* of capital embarked in the same trade? Since, then, we possessed the greatest amount of capital, and energy and skill equalled by no other nation, why should we fear to enter into a race of real open competition? If he looked to actual results and existing facts, was he compelled to retreat from his position? He was told—and he had communicated on the subject with persons who had had great experience, and whose opinions were entitled to every consideration—that shipbuilding was cheap in the Adriatic—that seamen were hardy and skilful, and satisfied with moderate wages—and that we had great reason to fear competition in that quarter; but when he looked to the free port of Trieste, and saw the amount of British commerce carried on there, he could not but believe that the apprehension entertained on the score of competition was groundless. Again, it was said that there was great reason to fear the effect of competition from the Baltic; but when he looked to the statistics of the trade of Russia, and saw the way in which we maintained our superiority in the free port of Hamburgh, he saw no reason to believe that the spirit and enterprise of British shipowners would succumb to any competition. Let the House look to the great increase in shipping which had taken place in the ports of Great Britain. The amount of tonnage in Liverpool in 1816 was 642,063; in 1845 it had increased to 2,819,014. The total increase was 2,176,951 tons, the increase of British tonnage being 1,414,659 tons, or nearly two-thirds of the whole. It had been said that this was under a system of reciprocity. He held in his hand a protectionist document, issued on the other side of the Atlantic, which bore upon this subject. It was an address delivered to the American Institute by the Hon. James Tallmadge, who was the Mr. George Frederick Young of the United States; and when he found what apprehensions were entertained in the United States, he was relieved from the fear that succesful competition could be carried on with this country. Mr. Tallmadge said—

> "In 1830 the British tonnage which entered our ports from all countries amounted to 87,281 tons. In 1835 it had increased to 529,922 tons. Upon these astonishing facts a Committee of Congress remarks, 'The existence of such a trade, under such circumstances, is a remarkable commentary upon the want of sagacity and foresight in the administration of our commercial concerns, and makes a powerful appeal to the consideration of Congress. The enterprise of this country is thus made subsidiary to the wealth, revenues, and navigation of the British colonies, and in the same degree prejudicial to our own, through the policy of our Government."

It appeared, then, that the apprehensions entertained in this country were not peculiar to this side of the water. He found from a report presented to the American Congress in 1846, that in 1815 the whole registered tonnage of the United States was 854,000 tons; in 1818 it went down to 606,000 tons; and in 1846 it had risen to 1,130,000 tons. The registered tonnage of Great Britain had in the same period risen from 2,500,000 tons to 3,800,000 tons. He also held in his hand a return which showed how much of this tonnage was engaged in the fisheries. Hon. Members were aware that, during the war, there was no American registered tonnage employed in the fisheries; but he had been startled to find that if the American tonnage employed in fisheries in 1846 were deducted, the amount of registered tonnage in 1846 was not greater than it was in 1815. The right hon. Member for the University of Oxford (Mr. Gladstone) had read, in the course of the powerful speech he had made on this subject, the declaration agreed to by the shipowners in 1833, with regard to their prospects; and the right hon. Gentleman also read returns which had since been made, to show how little reason there was for their despondency. He had referred to the proceedings before the Committee of 1833, to ascertain what were the opinions then entertained by shipowners, and, with the permission of the House, he would read the opinion of a gentleman well known to hon. Members opposite of the free-trade party, who was deservedly regarded as a high authority upon commercial matters in general, but whose testimony he more particularly called in aid on the present occasion, because he had taken a conspicuous part in opposition to this measure of the Government—he meant Mr. Aikin of Liverpool. This question was put to Mr. Aikin:—

> "You are aware that there have been very general complaints made by the parties engaged in shipping of the general distress in that branch of business? To what do you attribute that complaint chiefly, as you say that you yourself have been tolerably well off?"

Mr. Aikin replied—

> "There has been considerable stir made among shipowners with regard to the reciprocity treaties; but I am not aware of any trade that I have been deprived of, and I do not know in what instance I should be benefited by the abrogation of those treaties."

He was then asked—

> "Would it not be a great relief to the English shipowner to be allowed to build his ships abroad?" "No. If I were allowed to build ships at Hamburgh or Bremen I would not do so, because I should still have to get certain descriptions of timber from different places. If I could have foreign timber at a low duty, I would sooner build in England than in any other quarter."

Mr. Aikin then went into details to show that the repeal of the timber duties, and not the reciprocity treaties, was the proper mode of relieving the shipowner from the difficulties under which he laboured. Among other questions put to Mr. Aikin were these:—

> "If the British navigation were all conducted in the very best description of ships, do you think we could possibly compete with nations whose ships were not so durable, but still capable for a time of doing the work?" "I find that we are beating them in many places where we enter into competition. The Americans are beating us in the bringing of cotton."
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> "You stated that you do not fear competition from foreigners; do you find that in an indirect trade, for instance the trade between the Brazils and any part of Europe, our ships are able to compete successfully with foreign ships?" "The very low rate of freight from the Brazils of late has held out little inducement to go there; but British vessels of the first class are preferred, and in general from the Brazils and elsewhere compete successfully. If from Liverpool we have orders to charter vessels from St. Domingo, from the Havannah, or Brazil, and back to the Continent, the British ship invariably gets it."
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> "Is not that a voyage which might just as well be performed by an American ship?" "Yes; no law of ours could prevent it."

And as no law of ours can prevent the employment of the foreign ship, so no law of ours could be effectual in promoting the employment of the British. This was not the occasion on which the House was called upon to consider in detail all the propositions of the Government; but he could not help observing that there were, at least upon the face of the measure, some provisions which it was exceedingly difficult to reconcile with the principles and policy of this country. For instance, although it was proposed that the British shipowner should enter into free and unrestricted competition with the whole world, the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Labouchere) also proposed to lay upon him an obligation with regard to the manning of ships from which those with whom he was to compete would be exempt. The right hon. Gentleman had also told them that the British shipowner was to be free to obtain ships wherever he could obtain them cheapest; but he had not informed the House that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had any proposition to submit to them with regard to the duty on timber. He understood, then, that if the plan of the Government was adopted, British shipowners might import foreign ships duty free, but the raw material for constructing ships was still to be subjected to a considerable amount of duty. He believed that they might search the tariff of this country in vain for another instance where raw material was subjected to duty, while the manufactured article was altogether exempted. The right hon. Gentleman also proposed to except the coasting trade from the operation of this measure; but the right hon. Gentleman had told the House that he did not think this was a matter of any great importance. He (Mr. Cardwell) understood the right hon. Gentleman to say, that he did not consider this provision of any value in itself, but that he believed the proposal to open the coasting trade would occasion great alarm and consternation among the parties interested. He wished he could congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on having avoided exciting such alarm; but, as far as his experience went, the proposal of the Government had occasioned great consternation among those whose interests were at stake, and he did not think the exception made in favour of the coasting trade had at all tended to diminish that feeling. He believed the general opinion had been, that if the Legislature were going to establish freedom at all, they ought to have looked for compensation from the Americans with regard to their coasting trade, and that the reservation made on this point by the right hon. Gentleman would run the risk of defeating the object he had in view. These were the grounds upon which his right hon. Friend (Mr. Gladstone) appealed to the Government to introduce measures of relaxation in the way of reciprocity, and not in the way of retaliation. He must confess, he had felt much surprise that no Member of the Government had thought it necessary to allude to the speech of that right hon. Gentleman. He (Mr. Cardwell) only knew, therefore, by what he had heard from other sources, what were the reasons which had induced the Government to abandon the mode of reciprocity. He was told, they considered that there was, in the favoured nation clause of the treaties with particular Powers, an obstacle to proceeding with a general relaxation of the navigation laws by the mode of reciprocity, especially with reference to the relations existing between this country and Holland and Spain. Now, if this were the case, it was particularly unfortunate. He held in his hand two statements on the subject—the first from an authority which he believed to be unquestionable; and the other from evidence taken before the Committee. The first of these statements, speaking of the state of trade in Surinam, mentioned that a proclamation had been issued by the Governor of that colony, by which an *ad valorem* duty of 3 per cent was to be charged on all goods imported into the colony, if introduced in Netherlands vessels, and double that amount when imported in foreign bottoms. The importation of certain articles was to be free under the Dutch flag, but under a foreign flag to be charged 6 per cent *ad valorem*. It was also stated in evidence before the Committee that the differential duty in the Havannah upon cotton and linen goods was 10 per cent; that what paid 23 per cent in a Spanish vessel, paid 33 per cent in any foreign vessel. The hon. Member for Westbury had appealed to the advocates of the tariff of 1846, and had said, "If you go back to reciprocity, you are making a retrograde step, for you lay it down as a principle that it is not wise to be waiting on the pleasure of foreign countries; and therefore you should take that course which you think best for yourselves, and leave foreign countries to perceive the wisdom of your steps." But there was a great difference between the two cases. If by taking largely the raw material of the Baltic ports we could compel them to take our manufactured articles, we manifestly obtained a considerable advantage; their exports to us could not be paid for except by the import of our manufactures. But this applied only to the interchange of commodities different in kind, when it was true that to stimulate the import of the one, was virtually to stimulate the export of the other. It did not apply to the endeavours by a foreign Government to stimulate their shipping at the expense of ours: for if any artificial system of distinctive duties was established on the part of foreign countries, and not on ours, in the matter of carriage, it must operate disadvantageously to our shipping, and to the benefit of theirs. If the right hon. Gentleman opposite thought there was nothing in this argument, as applied to reciprocity, he would ask how the right hon. Gentleman proposed to deal with it as it applied to his own proposal with respect to retaliation? If this proceeding, by way of retaliation in such cases, was not to be a valid and effectual provision of the Bill, it ought not to be a provision of the Bill at all, for it would only be what was called "a tub thrown out to the whale." He found that the demand made by Prussia and America was for reciprocity. In the words of Mr. Bancroft, "universal reciprocity was called for, as the only basis of intercourse between two great nations." The noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in his reply to Mr. Bancroft's communication, said that he and his Colleagues intended to propose to Parliament measures which would enable them to deal on the most liberal terms with all countries which would give us corresponding advantages. He thought, therefore, that the writer of this letter certainly contemplated proceeding by way of reciprocity, and not by way of retaliation. He thought the House might fairly conclude that this was the intention of Her Majesty's Government when they framed the Speech from the Throne. He was unwilling to occupy the time of the House, particularly at this period of the discussion, with anything of a statistical kind; but, as he was invited by the right hon. Member for Stamford to testify his desire for reciprocity by joining with him in a general resolution, the substantial effect of which would be to interpose an obstacle to any change whatever in the laws of navigation, he should be obliged to refer to some facts as the grounds upon which his vote would be given. He thought that the resolution of the right hon. Gentleman was open to the charge of being very vague; but some of the witnesses examined had been less mysterious. One of these, Mr. Richmond, a most respectable gentleman, on whose opinion great stress had been laid, in the course of all the inquiries on this subject, distinctly said, that he regarded the "Asia, Africa, and America Clause" as one of the essential elements—he presumed, therefore, one of the "fundamental principles"—of the law. Now what was the operation of this clause? He remembered an instance in which an English gentleman shipped, in a British ship, a cargo of hides from South America to Antwerp. At Antwerp he again shipped them, in another British ship, to London, and petitioned the Treasury to allow the hides to be landed. He was, however, as the servant of the Lords of the Treasury, obliged to tell him that the provisions of the navigation laws were too sacred to be interfered with; and the party was therefore compelled to send his hides back to South America, to be imported again into England. There was a discussion the other day in the House on the subject of importing cotton from Havre in English ships. It was true, that cotton was cheap in England at the time, and there was no great demand for cotton at the moment. But let the House observe the manner in which the navigation laws operated in that case. If the cotton had been manufactured in France into stockings, it might have been brought in a French ship into England. As a raw material it might have been re-exported to New Orleans, and from thence imported in an American bottom to Great Britain. In either of these cases, we would have received it in a foreign, but as raw material wanted for the employment of our own manufacturers, we would not allow its importation from France even in a British vessel. There were innumerable anomalies and absurdities of the same kind in these navigation laws; and yet we were invited by the friends of the shipping interest to maintain their fundamental principles—to refuse to consider them at all. He thought that the House would do a most unfriendly act to those whose interests they were bound to consult, if they did not proceed to consider the navigation laws, in compliance with the Speech from the Throne, and the demand made by Prussia and America. That was the question for the consideration of the House, and not whether the measure proposed by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Labouchere) should be adopted or not. When he looked at the increased tonnage of this country, as well as the increase of its imports and exports, and when he considered how important it was that we should become—what we were in a fair way of becoming—the emporium of the world, he thought the time was come for a judicious relaxation of these laws; and he did not hesitate to declare his belief (speaking with a due reservation as to the mode in which real freedom of competition was to be attained) that it was a libel on the British name to say that we were not qualified to compete, and in competition to succeed, against every other nation in the world. With fair play and a real equality, an unrestricted intercourse between nations must be of the greatest benefit to this country. He had only one word more to say, and that was, he earnestly desired that such a settlement might be effected during the present Session of Parliament as would guard these interests against the apprehension of injudicious changes, and which might place them upon a firm and satisfactory footing; for he knew nothing more calculated injuriously to interfere with those interests than a prolonged state of doubt as to the measures that might be adopted by the Legislature. For these reasons—reserving to himself the right of giving the measure which the Government might propose the fullest consideration—he should now vote for the House going into Committee.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER entirely concurred with what had fallen from the hon. Gentleman opposite that this was not the proper opportunity for discussing the details of the measure; he should therefore abstain from going into those points which the hon. Gentleman had very properly reserved to himself to consider at a future stage of the discussion. That hon. Gentleman and other hon. Members who had preceded him in this debate, had gone at such length into the reasons for supporting the measure generally, and had stated so many facts and statistical details upon the subject, that it was unnecessary for him (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) to weary the House by entering into any lengthened details, or of urging arguments which had already been so fully and ably expressed. Indeed, very little argument had been advanced, especially to-night, against the measure. Only two hon. Gentlemen had spoken against the proposition of Her Majesty's Government. They had heard a succession of Gentlemen differing in opinion upon various minor points, but at the same time unanimously concurring in supporting some description of change in the present navigation laws. With the exception of the hon. Member for East Suffolk and the hon. Member for Brecon, there was not a single Member who had spoken in the course of that night's debate who did not think that some change of the law was necessary. Indeed, he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) knew not upon what general grounds the measure could be opposed, unless it were contended that it was advantageous to enhance the price of those foreign articles which were required for the consumption of the population and for the employment of the manufacturers of this country. It was only about a year since that this country required a large supply of foreign corn to feed the people, when by common consent they suspended the navigation laws to give facility to the importation of corn, and to cheapen the cost of its conveyance to this country. This was a complete acknowledgment of the effect to be anticipated from relaxing the provisions of the navigation law; and he knew not how they could refuse to adopt a similar measure if they were anxious to increase the importation of those articles which were constantly required, as articles of consumption and materials of manufacture in this country. With regard to the shipowners and shipbuilders, he believed that the facts stated by the hon. Member for Liverpool and the hon. Member for Westbury were proofs sufficient that the British shipowners could successfully compete in open trade with any shipowners in the world; and he considered it had been abundantly proved that this country could build ships as cheap—taking into consideration the time British-built ships lasted—as any other country, not only in Europe, but in Asia and America too. It was urged, indeed, as an argument against this proposition, that other countries possessed an advantage over the British shipbuilder, inasmuch as the latter was obliged to import the timber wherewith to build ships; but had it not been clearly proved that almost all foreign-built ships were completed and equipped mainly by articles carried from this country? He did not, therefore, think that the British shipbuilder required any further advantages by the admission of foreign timber free of all duty for building ships in this country. It had been abundantly proved that with the duties as they were the British shipbuilder could successfully compete with the shipbuilders of the most favoured countries in the world. It was true, perhaps, that ships could be built cheaper in our own colonial possessions than here; but it had been shown that, taking into consideration the duration of the vessels, the English-built ships were in the end cheaper than those built in our North American colonies. The hon. Gentleman opposite had adverted to the invitation given to us by America, and also to the invitation—for he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) would not use a stronger term—which had been given to this country by Prussia to relax our navigation laws in order to open to them a trade from which they were at present debarred. He (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) believed that in our trade with the United States we should be clear gainers by the change proposed. He believed that, so far from America gaining an advantage over us by a relaxation of the present system, the balance would be clearly on our side. The importations from America were chiefly of American produce brought indifferently by American and British ships; a large portion of that which is carried to America is the produce of other countries in order to make up an assorted cargo; and under the existing law of the United States, such goods were only admissible if imported in American bottoms. At present British ships brought back goods from America the produce of that country, in exchange for which they could only take out British-manufactured goods: they could not take out the goods of any other nation; but American ships could take from Europe the goods of other nations. America, therefore, had a decided advantage over this country in the carrying trade to the United States. If the navigation laws of the two countries were relaxed according to the liberal proposal of the United States, their vessels would be on the same footing of equality in carrying goods from hence to America, as they were now on, as regards importations from that country. With regard to Prussia, he thought the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stamford had animadverted in very strong and unmerited terms on what had taken place between that country and the British Government. It was notorious that those reciprocity treaties to which the right hon. Gentleman had alluded, and which were effected by Mr. Huskisson, were forced upon this country by the conduct of foreign States, and that they were not concessions made voluntarily by England. Mr. Huskisson felt it absolutely necessary, in order to retain those advantages which this country possessed, that similar advantages should be granted to all foreign States. What was then given by those treaties was sufficient for the time; but Prussia now felt that she must have something more, and she had intimated her wish in terms of which it was impossible to complain. He (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) must say, that it was exceedingly hard and unjust to Prussia to complain of her conduct. She had a fair right to demand from us that which she had demanded; and, so far from having proceeded in a hostile or obnoxious manner, he must say, that if the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Herries) had referred to the letter addressed by the Minister of Prussia to the Government of this country, he would have seen that Prussia had proceeded in a most courteous manner, and had given us warning of what her future course would be. She said, that she gave the notice which enabled her to put an end to the present arrangement by treaty, which she considered unfair to her shipping, but that she would not hastily withdraw those privileges which had already been conceded to us, but would leave matters to stand as they were, the advantages being all on our part—she would wait until we had further considered and determined what course we would pursue with regard to our navigation laws. He was of opinion that this country would lose infinitely more than Prussia if matters were placed strictly upon a footing of equality between the two countries, so that we were deprived of the advantages which we now enjoyed in Prussian ports, but which we denied to Prussian vessels in our ports. England at present enjoyed a large portion of the carrying trade to European ports. About 200,000 tons of British shipping in the year 1846 entered into the principal ports of Europe, excluding France. That was our share of the European carrying trade. From the whole of that we should be debarred if foreign nations acted upon the principle of retaliation, should England retain her navigation laws. With regard, therefore, to the foreign trade, he thought it was essential that England should make a concession, which, in truth, foreign countries had a right to demand of us. It was impossible for us to maintain our present position, and retain the carrying trade of Europe. It did not depend upon ourselves, or our legislation; foreign nations had it in their power to deprive us of it; and this they certainly would do, unless we conceded to them what, after all, was only fair between the two parties, the same privileges as we enjoyed in their ports. With regard to our colonial trade, that did not stand on the same footing. We had proposed to relax the carrying trade with the colonies, not on the principle of reciprocity with foreign nations, but because we believed it would be for the advantage of the colonies. The colonies would derive great benefit from those relaxations of the law. It was disputed by no one, that Canada, South Australia, and Ceylon, were anxious for the removal of the restrictions on their trade, and had urged on us the relaxation of the navigation laws. So indeed had Jamaica and Trinidad; and he thought that the evidence which was given by a single Member of the House of Assembly in Jamaica was not an answer to the representations made by that Assembly, and by the Governor of Trinidad, that the further relaxation of the law would be an advantage to those colonies. The Governor of Trinidad had pointed out various ways in which such relaxation would be beneficial to the trade of that island; and he mentioned one instance, where the importation of the Coolies by American vessels, if it had been possible, would have reduced by one-half the cost of conveying those labourers from the East Indies. Without trespassing unnecessarily on the time of the House, he wished to advert to the ground which had been taken by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford (Mr. Gladstone), and also by the hon. Member for Dover (Sir G. Clerk), and the hon. Member for Liverpool (Mr. Cardwell), and that was as to the mode of proceeding adopted by the Government, as compared with that of proceeding by way of reciprocity treaties, and not by direct enactment. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford said, that he was prepared to go the full length of the measure proposed by the Government; but that he would proceed by treaty upon reciprocal terms. So also the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stamford had said that he too would relax the law relating to the carrying trade, and that he was prepared to enter into treaties with foreign Powers upon the principle of reciprocity. The hon. Gentleman who had last addressed the House had alluded to the letter addressed to the noble Lord the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs by Mr. Bancroft, in which he offered to enter into a reciprocity treaty with this country; and the hon. Gentleman seemed to think that he derived evidence from that correspondence that the Government had changed its mind on the subject. But what was the fact? Mr. Bancroft offered to enter into a reciprocity treaty; and the noble Lord the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs replied that it would be improper to enter into engagements which would be at variance with some of the most important principles of the existing navigation law without the previous sanction of Parliament, but at the same time said, that it was the intention of the Government to propose to Parliament measures which would enable them to meet the offer made by the United States of placing our commercial intercourse on the most liberal basis. He was far from saying that much argument, and good argument too, might not be advanced in favour of proceeding by reciprocity treaty; and he fairly admitted that, looking at the possible facility of passing a measure of that kind through Parliament, he at one time was not disposed to entertain that proposition. It might be the most convenient mode of proceeding; but the more they looked into the question, and considered the difficulties with which it was beset, the more they were convinced that it was unadvisable to proceed in that mode. The Government came to the decided conviction that the best mode of proceeding would be to legislate directly with regard to the great majority of cases, reserving some special cases to be dealt with by Order in Council. The main inducement for their adopting this course was the experience they had derived from the occurrences which took place under the Government of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Tamworth, when he attempted to proceed by way of treaty to effect a relaxation of the customs duties. ["Hear, hear!"] The noble Lord cheered. He (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) was aware that the noble Lord drew a distinction which in his opinion was based on no solid and real difference in principle, though he did not mean to say that the two cases were precisely identical. In 1842 the right hon. Gentleman (Sir R. Peel) proposed to reduce the customs duties on obtaining a reduction of foreign tariffs; but he utterly failed in accomplishing his object. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford bore the most unequivocal testimony to the failure; but he had placed the difficulty of proceeding in that form on what he called the incommensurable quality of the articles. He (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) could not understand why a reduction of the duty on wine might not be met with a corresponding reduction of duty on any article of manufacture, if they were really anxious to make mutual concessions for the sake of mutual advantages. The right hon. Gentleman said, there was no difficulty as regarded the reciprocal admission of shipping, for the privileges to be conceded on both sides were precisely of the same description, and could be made strictly equal. He (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) did not think that this was quite so simple or quite so easy. It was quite clear that the admission of the ships of other countries to our colonies on the condition that they admitted our ships to their colonies, appeared in phraseology an equality; but if England were to open the whole of her wide-spread colonial trade to Denmark, on the condition that Denmark opened her colonial trade to England, would any one pretend that this, in point of fact, was an equal transaction? It might be so, speaking with strict technicality, but it would not be an equality in reality, nor would England by such a transaction receive a tenth or a hundredth part of an equivalent. It seemed, then, to him, that the difficulty was just as great in the attempt to obtain precisely equal advantages in the case of reciprocal advantages to shipping as in reciprocal reductions of customs duties. But there was great difficulty in dealing with any one country by means of treaty, because we were hampered and bound by treaties with other Powers, which rendered this country incapable of carrying out particular views with respect to any single country. They had had experience of this fact in 1844, when the Government of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, finding the price of sugar brought from our own colonies high in this country, determined to open the trade to foreign sugar; but, retaining the feeling which had been so long predominant in this country—maintaining in favour of the exclusion of slave-grown sugar a lively recollection of recent debates not long previous on this subject—they were unwilling to admit slave-grown sugar into the markets of this country, and attempted to restrict the importation of foreign sugar to such as was the produce of free labour. Were they able to carry out their own principle? They found themselves unable to do so; and, bound by treaty, they were obliged to admit the slave-grown sugars of Venezuela and the United States. His right hon. Friend the Member for Portsmouth told them, that they were bound by treaty to admit the slave-grown sugar of the Danish colonies, if they admitted it from any other country. A question also arose about the admission of Spanish sugar, and long communications took place on the subject between the Spanish Minister and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; and he certainly thought that the Spanish Minister had the best of the correspondence. This mode of proceeding by treaty led precisely to what the hon. Gentleman alluded to as a great difficulty in our way of proceeding, namely, to angry and disagreeable correspondence with foreign Powers, which the hon. Gentleman thought would be avoided by proceeding by way of treaty, but which he considered would be inevitable if they proceeded in the way Government proposed, by throwing open the trade as a general rule, keeping at the same time a retaliatory power. The hon. Gentleman mentioned a case in which, in order to get rid of some difficulty, in respect to the trade with Austria, under a treaty and Act of Parliament, the strange conclusion was come to that a port in Turkey was a port in Austria. The States of the Zollverein claimed a similar privilege; and we had declared that Prussian vessels might bring goods from the mouths of the Elbe and Meuse, as if they were ports in Prussia. Russia claimed the same privilege for her vessels in the mouths of the Niemen and Vistula, both of them in Prussia; and accordingly we declared the Prussian ports of Dantzic and Memel to be Russian ports. Hamburgh and Hanover, in whose territory the mouth of the Elbe is situated, complained that it was unjust to them to allow Prussian vessels to compete with their vessels in their own ports. We could not deny the injustice, and accordingly we have allowed Hamburgh and Hanover vessels to bring goods to this country from Prussian ports, as if they were ports in Hamburgh and Hanover. Next came the claim of Oldenburg and Mecklenburg. They said that they would obtain the privilege of using the Elbe and the Meuse, or Prussian ports, as their own, if they joined the Zollverein; but that, as they already gave us more privileges than the Zollverein did, it was unjust to refuse them the same privileges: we could not deny this, and we conceded them the privileges they asked for. What could be stronger proof of the absurdity of our navigation laws, and the impossibility of maintaining them, than this? We actually have declared that Memel—almost at the mouth of the Gulf of Finland—is the most convenient port for the exportation of Oldenburg produce, whose territory is entirely on the shores of the German ocean. Then came the claim of the Dutch. They said, as Hamburgh and Hanover had said, that it was unjust to allow Prussian ships to compete with Dutch vessels in their own port of Rotterdam on the Maese, and not to allow Dutch vessels to compete with Prussian vessels at Dantzic and Memel. What answer could we make to the Dutch? They were entitled to the privileges of the most favoured nation; and in justice we could not refuse their claim, as indeed we had intimated to them. The result was, that as regarded the greater part of the European trade our navigation laws had been broken down, and could not be maintained. They might proceed by treaty or by law, but the same end would be reached in either way—that was to say, that, as regarded the trade with by far the greater number of foreign nations, certainly with all those whose rivalry we had been taught to fear—the United States, Prussia, and the Baltic Powers—our navigation laws would be a dead letter. It seemed to him far better, then, to proceed in the simple manner of repealing laws which could not be maintained in practice, and to throw open by law to other nations that trade to this country which at present we enjoyed by law with them. After all, with respect to the expediency of proceeding by one way or by the other, the question was—and this was an answer to the argument of the hon. Gentleman—was it or was it not an advantage to this country to have cheap conveyance and low freights? If it were an advantage, then it would be an absurdity to debar themselves from that which was a benefit, unless it should please other countries to pursue a particular course. Let this country take the advantage whenever it could get it; and let not the option be left to other countries of debarring this country from enjoying it. It was not difficult to put a case to show the advantage of the mode of proceeding adopted by the Government. Not above a month ago an importer of corn applied to the Treasury, under somewhat similar circumstances to those under which the importer of hides mentioned by the hon. Gentlemen applied to the late Government. He stated that he had a cargo of Indian corn in the river, imported in a foreign ship, which was inadmissible under the Navigation Act. Under the existing law, any ship might bring any goods, and warehouse them in this country; but they were admissible or not, for consumption, under the Navigation Act, according to the shipping which brought them. Now, circumstances might have occurred, and did occur last year, in which it would have been exceedingly desirable and necessary to admit that corn. Now, supposing the reciprocity system adopted, and that that corn had come in a ship of a country with which we had no reciprocity treaty, then no Order in Council and no order from the Treasury could without infraction of the law admit that Indian corn; and the Government would be debarred from doing that which might be clearly beneficial to the country, because some other foreign Power had not been willing to enter into a reciprocity treaty with us. He had thus shown a clear case of the advantage to this country of admitting from warehouse goods which, under the existing law, or under the proposed law of the hon. Gentleman, would not be admissible. It was a different thing to infringe the statute law, and to dispense with an Order in Council; and he was against maintaining a law which, under such circumstances, would operate so prejudicially to the country. As a general rule, he would admit foreign ships of all countries, because it was for the advantage of this country to have commodities brought cheaply here. That was the general rule; but he would not say that there might not be particular and special cases, in respect to which it would be desirable to retain the power of excluding foreign ships, in order to force the countries to which they belonged, if they should be unwilling, to come to a reciprocal concession of advantages. The right hon. Member for Dover had enlarged very much on what he termed the unprecedented and unconstitutional provision by which it was proposed to give to the Queen in Council the power of regulating these matters, and of imposing and relaxing, as he said, restrictions. Really, the right hon. Gentleman must have forgotten the experience he acquired at the Board of Trade, for it was almost the exception to the rule that such things should be done by law and not by Orders in Council, though, undoubtedly, these Orders in Council were given under the general sanction and principle of the law. The general practice has been to pass an Act empowering the Queen in Council to impose or take off duties in certain cases, and under certain limitations contained in the Act. This was sometimes exercised to give effect to treaties, but very frequently without any reference to obligations of that kind. He would shortly refer to one or two instances in point. And, firstly, to a case in which the proceeding was by treaty. The Act 59 Geo. III. cap. 54, was passed to enable His Majesty to carry out the treaties with the United States and with Portugal. It provided that equal duties should be paid on the importation or exportation of goods in British or American vessels, and that no higher dues should be levied by the Trinity House, or other corporations, on American or Portuguese than on British vessels. These provisions were extended to vessels of other Powers with which similar treaties might be concluded by the 8 & 9 Vict. cap. 90. Without going into further detail as to the provisions of these Acts, the result was that on the conclusion of a treaty with a foreign Power, the export duty on coal, for instance, would cease on coals shipped by the vessels of such country; and not only would the higher light-dues usually charged on foreign shipping cease to be payable by such vessels, but the Treasury would be rendered liable in some cases to make compensation to the parties entitled to such higher dues. In this case, therefore, the Queen has the power, without any fresh enactment, not only of taking off a duty, but actually of imposing a charge on the public revenue. The second class of cases are without reference to treaty. The Act of 4 Geo. IV. cap. 77, authorises the Queen in Council to order that no higher charges shall be laid on goods imported or exported in the ships of a foreign country, than on like goods in

British ships. The Act 8 & 9 Vict. cap. 90, empowers the Queen to impose an additional duty on articles the produce of any country in which higher duties are levied on British than on foreign produce; and to prohibit the importation of, or to lay one-fifth additional duty upon any manufactured article imported from a country which prohibits the export of the raw material from which such article is made. So with regard to our colonial trade, the 8 & 9 Vict. cap. 93, provides that foreign ships shall not trade with our possessions, unless they be ships of a country which gives similar privileges to our vessels, or places us on the footing of the most favoured nation, or unless Her Majesty shall grant them such privileges whether they fulfil those conditions or not. The case, however, most precisely in point, and the one which we have in fact exactly followed as a precedent in the present case, is an Act of the year 1822, which was pointed out by my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade. The right hon. Member for Oxford was mistaken in supposing that the Act referred to was that of 1825. Previous to the year 1817, vessels of the United States were not allowed to trade with our West Indian colonies; but vessels of other countries in America belonging to a foreign European State were under certain circumstances admitted. About the year 1817, the United States passed certain Acts, prohibiting British vessels from trading with the United States. The Act of 1822, to which he had referred, namely, the 3rd George IV. cap. 44, opened the trade of the West Indies to the ships of all countries in America, whether under the dominion of a foreign European Power or not, including of course the United States. In this self-same Act, however, thus opening for the first time by law the trade to independent American States, the 15th Clause enabled the King by Order in Council to prohibit such intercourse to the ships of any country not treating us on the footing of equality. The result of this was, that the Americans took off their prohibition upon our shipping, but imposed a higher tonnage duty upon British ships, and a higher duty on goods imported in them. In the next year, therefore, 1823, an Act was passed to amend the Act of 1822, authorising the King to impose additional tonnage duties; and in the year 1824 a further Act was passed empowering the King to impose additional duties on goods imported in American ships. Taking, then, these amending Statutes with the first Act of 1822, we opened the trade for the first time to American vessels with the West Indian colonies, retaining powers in the same Acts to prohibit such trade, or to impose additional tonnage or customs duties, which is precisely the course which we propose to adopt in the Bill of this year. But not only were these powers so retained, but they were actually exercised. Orders in Council, in 1823 and 1826, were issued, levying countervailing duties on American vessels, and goods imported in them; and the exercise of these powers was successful; for, after these Orders in Council on our part, and countervailing proclamations on the part of the United States, arrangements were soon after entered into, by which the goods and vessels of the two countries were admitted on equal terms into the ports of the United States and of our colonies respectively. The case which he had thus quoted appeared to him to be not only a precise precedent in point of law, but one which showed the advantage which might be derived in some cases from the exercise of the power which it was proposed to retain in the Bill. The general principle upon which we proposed to act was laid down by law, and was applicable to the great majority of cases; but a special power was retained to meet particular cases, which he trusted we should not have to exercise, but of which he did not think it advisable that the Crown should be divested. He would not go into the other questions raised on this subject. He would simply say, as to the manning of our ships, in which subject, from old Admiralty recollections, he took the deepest interest, that he did not attach much importance to the point whether the vessels were manned wholly by Englishmen or in part by foreigners. It was quite clear that foreigners serving in British ships must be paid the same wages as other seamen in the same ship; and it was equally clear, that if other nations had their seamen taken away in consequence of their finding higher wages elsewhere, foreign shipowners must raise their wages in order to retain their crews; the raising of wages in foreign vessels would bring them to a level with our own, and thus deprive them of their supposed advantage of low wages to their men. A great portion of the Amecan navy was manned by English seamen; and it was quite clear from that fact, that we bred more seamen than we could employ. But, after all, he believed the real question was, whether this measure was or was not for the general advantage of the commercial marine of the country. He believed it was so—that it would tend to improve and develop the energies of British seamen—and that it would to the same extent tend to the advantage of the whole commercial marine. If this were so, it would precisely to the same extent improve the nursery of the Queen's naval service. Without going further, he would only express his firm conviction that the British marine, so far from being injured by any measure of this kind, would still retain the high position it had hitherto occupied in comparison with the marine of other countries.

SIR CHARLES BURRELL next addressed the House, but in so low a tone of voice as to be scarcely audible. He protested against the measure of Her Majesty's Government as a most dangerous one. In the present state of Europe it was hopeles to expect anything like reciprocity.

Debate adjourned.

SPIRITS.

House in Committee on the Spirits Acts.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, that early in the Session he had announced his intention of introducing a measure to remove some of the restrictions imposed by the existing laws of excise on the subject of spirits; and, having anxiously waited for an opportunity of doing so, he had not been able to obtain one until that evening. He would now state very shortly the object of the Bills which he proposed, with a view to their being introduced before Whitsuntide, so that an opportunity might be afforded to the parties interested of considering the details in the recess. He was happy to say, that the Bills consisted almost entirely of explanations of the existing laws, and on that account he hoped they would afford satisfaction to all immediately concerned. With regard to excise regulations generally, he would observe, that a return laid on the table last year, on the Motion of the hon. Member for Dumfries, showed to what an extent remissions in the excise department had already been carried into effect. He would state shortly that within the last few years the duties on stone bottles, starch, auctions, glass, vinegar, and tiles, had been repealed; while those on paper and on soap had been reduced. Very considerable relaxations had also been made in the operation of the law with regard to articles on which the duty was still retained, such as malt, paper, bricks, and soap. Perhaps the best proof which he could give of the relaxation of the stringency of the excise laws was to be found in the decrease which had taken place in the number of prosecutions under the excise laws. No doubt some portion of this decrease was owing to the repeal of certain duties, in respect of which no offence could any longer be committed; but the decrease was very extraordinary, and the result could not but be considered satisfactory. He found from a return with which he had been furnished by the Excise, that in the year 1832 there were 4,309 informations heard before the magistrates; in the year 1847 the number was 1,688, being a diminution of 2,621. The summary informations before the Court of Excise Commissioners amounted in 1832 to 974; in 1847 the number was 206, being a diminution of 768. The informations in the Court of Exchequer amounted in 1842, only five years ago, to 183; in 1847 the number was only 74, being a diminution of 109. He thought this afforded satisfactory proof that the greatest pains were taken to prevent a breach of the law, and that the law was administered with as much consideration for the interests of the parties concerned as was consistent with the protection of the public revenue. The measure which he then proposed to introduce referred only to spirits. Though he should have been happy to propose changes affecting other articles, he thought that after the daily experience which they had of the great difficulty of actually carrying measures through that House, it was better that he should confine himself to the measures of most pressing importance, and which he saw the greatest prospect of bringing to a successful issue. The first Bill related to the warehousing of spirits, both for home consumption and for exportation. The House might be aware, that distillers in England were not then permitted to warehouse their spirits in Scotland; they had never been allowed to do so without paying the duty. This Bill would put the English distillers on the same footing as those of Scotland and Ireland. He proposed to permit the spirits of any one part of the United Kingdom to be warehoused in any other part without paying duty. Heretofore the English distiller had not been permitted to warehouse his spirits in Scotland, although the Scotch distiller had been permitted to warehouse his spirits in this country. The English distiller would, in future, be in the same position as the Scotch, and would be relieved from the necessity of paying the duty within a limited time. This Bill, he believed, contained all that was requisite with regard to spirits for home consumption, giving to the distillers of the three kingdoms an equal power of warehousing in either of them. He now came to spirits for exportation. With regard to England, the present law gave a most unfair advantage to foreign spirits. Under the existing law, it was impossible for either the rectifier or the distiller of spirits to warehouse home-made spirits for exportation. The consequence was, that the Dutch distiller having brought his spirits to this country, put them in bonded warehouses; and when he found it convenient to do so, he took them out and exported them to our colonies. This advantage was not enjoyed by the English distiller. He proposed therefore to permit the English distiller to place in bonded warehouses rectified spirits, but not sweetened spirits —spirits which had been prepared to the utmost point short of sweetening—and to allow him to export them free of duty, thereby putting him on an equality with the foreign distiller. If sugar was added to the spirit, the action of the hydrometer, by which the strength would otherwise be ascertained was destroyed, so that it would be impossible to allow any spirit to be sweetened before it was put in bond; but when in bond the merchants might sweeten it as they liked, and transmit it for exportation. The only export trade in spirits to any great extent was carried on from Scotland, and a very considerable quantity was sent to the United States. The largest amount they had hitherto sent was 90,000 gallons; but in last year Scotland had only exported 50,000 gallons, and he attributed that decrease to the heavy duty, which amounted to nearly 100 per cent. He proposed, then, to permit the Scotch distiller to warehouse spirits free of duty, and to allow him a repayment, on exportation, not of 8*d*., but of 14*d*., and 5 per cent. He would thus allow the distillers of England, France, and Scotland, equal advantages; and he would not ask them to pay the duties till the spirits were taken out of bond. With respect to foreign exportation, he would allow them to export spirits on the terms he had mentioned, but could not permit spirits to be taken out of the Customs warehouses for home consumption. The second measure he had to propose related to the present system of measurement and surveying. Hon. Gentlemen who had paid attention to this subject might remember that the Commissioners of Excise had reported to the House that the advantages of the system in England, Ireland, and Scotland, were by no means commensurate with the expense and trouble, and might be altogether discontinued, with this exception, that the Board of Excise should have the power of examining stock whenever they thought proper. He proposed, acting on that recommendation, to relieve spirits from the necessity of survey by an excise officer, although he would reserve a power to the Excise whenever there appeared any reasonable suspicion of fraud, to examine the quantity of spirits, and to take stock. There were various clauses which he would not then go into; and the only other provision of material importance which the Bill would contain with respect to spirits was to permit persons who now took out ten-guinea licenses to sell a less quantity of foreign liquors and spirits than they were permitted to do by law. The object of the Bill in that respect was to give to those who took out a five-guinea license (as we understood the right hon. Baronet) the power of selling the quantity which was sold by those who took out a ten-guinea license, and to reduce the quantity allowed to be sold by the latter, thus removing from a large class of persons the liability under which they at present lay to a very heavy fine, for breaches of the law which were committed every day. Every one knew that foreign liquors, such as noyeau and maraschino, were not bought in large quantities, but were retailed by Italian warehouses and such shops as occasion arose. This was a breach of the law, liable to a heavy fine; but as an illustration of the practice, he might state, that on examining the account-book in one of these shops, of some time back, the first name that appeared was that of his late Majesty King William IV.; on the next day came the name of his right hon. Friend the Member for Portsmouth, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Baring); and on the following day appeared that of Mr. J. Wood, Chairman of the Board of Excise. He proposed to admit spirit-dealers to sell quantities of spirits down to one quart, instead of restricting them, as at present, to two gallons. He had had some doubt whether the last provision should be extended to Ireland, for on looking to the returns of convictions for illicit distillation in that country during the last two years, he was sorry to say a most fearful increase was shown, notwithstanding the distress which had prevailed; but as he was anxious not to permit any difference to exist between the two countries, he had decided on giving a similar permission to Ireland, reserving to himself the power of recalling the privilege in case it should be abused. The right hon. Gentleman concluded by moving—

> "1. That it is expedient to alter and amend certain of the Laws and regulations of Excise respecting the warehousing and removal of British Spirits in the United Kingdom, and their exportation therefrom to Foreign Parts, and the survey of dealers in and retailers of Spirits, and the sale and removal of Spirits by permit from the stock of such traders.
>
> "2. That an Excise Duty of five pounds five shillings shall be paid by every licensed dealer in Spirits for an additional License, authorising such person to sell by retail any quantity (the same not being less than one reputed quart bottle) of Foreign Spirits or Liqueurs not to be drunk or consumed upon the premises."

The resolutions agreed to. House resumed.

House adjourned at a quarter to Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, June 9, 1848.

Minutes.] Public Bills. 1^{a} Law of Entail (Scotland); Game Certificates for Killing Hares.

2^{a} Registering Births, &c. (Scotland); Marriage (Scotland).

3^{a} and passed;—Collectors of Cess (Ireland); Great Yarmouth Freemen Disfranchisement; Petty Bag Office.

Received the Royal Assent.—Tobago Relief and Immigration into British Guiana and Trinidad; Indemnity; Removal of Aliens; Insolvent Debtors (India).

Petitions Presented. From Glasgow, and other Places, against any Alteration of the Navigation Laws.—From York and Castleford, against the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sundays.—From Adpar, for an Extension of the Suffrage, &c.—From Withington, and other Places, against the Diplomatic Relations, Court of Rome, Bill.—From Derby, for the Discontinuance of Grants of Money to the Temple of Juggernaut, and other Temples in India.—From the Trustees of several Charitable Institutions, for Exemption from the Payment of Legacy Duty upon Bequests made to them.—From Guardians of the Bath Union, for the Adoption of Measures for the Better Prevention of Vagrancy.—From several Persons engaged at the Haymarket Theatre, for some Legal Enactment limiting the number of Foreign Theatres in the Metropolis, and the Duration of their Seasons.—From Stirling, and a great number of other Places, against the Registering Births, &c. (Scotland) Bill.

SPANISH REFUGEES.

The Marquess of LONDONDERRY said that he wished to say a few words on the subject of a return which he moved for a few days ago, and which was now on their Lordships' table. The return to which he alluded was a return of the number of Spanish Refugees who had been pensioners of the British Government since the death of Ferdinand VII., in 1833; specifying what number of such pensioners had been put on the list since that period, and also what number were now receiving such pensions; and also the total amount of the pensions allowed to such present pensioners. It appeared from this return that the total amount of Spanish Refugees who were pensioners in 1833 was 287. In that year a great number of persons were put on the list. The total amount of pensions allowed at present, according to the estimate of the current year, was 1,800*l.* He had been informed that not only had persons in good circumstances been placed on the list, but persons who had no claim whatever—who, in fact, were most improper persons to receive pensions. Here was the list, and he would read a few of the names. [The noble Marquess here mentioned several of the parties he referred to.] These were the men who actually had been placed on the list since 1823. Many of these persons were entirely unworthy of a pension. He mentioned these circumstances for the purpose of showing that he had some grounds for asking for information on this subject. All the recipients of these pensions, up to 1823, received them for services in the Peninsular war. From that period, up to 1833, many pensions had ceased, but still many had been added. These additions were, as he conceived open to great objection; and the original list, intended only for a temporary purpose, had now become a list of life-pensions not for the indigent. If the list were examined, it would appear from the vouchers that not half-a-dozen of the original recipients now remained. It was believed in Spain that we supported these refugees for the purpose of carrying on political intrigues in the Peninsula. He wished to find out for what services these pensions had been granted. In troubled times like the present, he thought it was the duty of their Lordships to look into all these matters.

Lord MONTEAGLE said, that he could not avoid saying a word on this subject. Reflections were now made by the noble Marquess against these individuals without notice and in their absence. It was repeatedly proposed in the House of Commons that this list should be called for;

but, on an appeal made to the gentlemanly feeling of the House, the Motion was always withdrawn. It would be dishonourable to the country to give its charity with one hand to foreigners in distress, and with the other to publish their names to the world. The Government was never responsible for placing these persons on the list. They were placed there by the authorities at the Horse Guards. These pensions were annually voted by Parliament, and were administered by the Horse Guards. He did not think that a stigma should be passed on men who, in addition to the paltry pittance which they received from this country, endeavoured to increase their means by honest industry.

The DUKE of WELLINGTON said that these pensions originated in the first instance from private charity. There were balls and bazaars for these persons. Afterwards the public came forward. He was satisfied that all these pensions had always been administered on the principle of charity, and nothing else.

The MARQUESS of LONDONDERRY was about to make some further remarks when

The EARL of MINTO said that he wished to speak to order. He was certain that there would be great inconvenience if subjects of this sort were brought before the House without notice, and when the parties who would be affected by that discussion could have no opportunity of meeting any charges that might be brought against them.

The MARQUESS of LONDONDERRY said, that he stood corrected. His object merely was to call the attention of their Lordships to the paper which had been laid on the table.

LORD DENMAN said that he should like to know the amount of these pensions.

LORD BROUGHAM: 1,800*l.* a year.

THE PENINSULAR MEDALS.

The DUKE of RICHMOND said, that he now wished to ask his noble Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, if any thing had arisen which could be adduced as a sufficient cause why the medals which had been so long promised, had not been issued to the officers, non-commissioned officers, and private soldiers and sailors who served in the late war?

EARL GREY said, that he understood the dies were now complete, and that no time would be lost in getting the medals ready for delivery. As, however, the name of each individual had to be engraved on his medal, together with the name of the action in which he had been engaged, the preparation of the medals was a work of great labour, and necessarily of great time. He believed, from communications made by Mr. Wyon, that in a very short period the delivery would commence. It was not intended that the delivery should be suspended until all the medals were ready, but it would begin as soon as a certain number were prepared.

The MARQUESS of LONDONDERRY said, that he thought that the introduction of this *ex post facto* system of rewards would be found very injurious. In fact, he must deprecate the recent prostitution of rewards which had taken place. These medals had been squeezed out of the Government, and he thought that, as an old officer, he had a right to express his opinion on the subject.

The DUKE of RICHMOND: I will now move for a return of those officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers and sailors who are to receive this medal. I do this to place myself right with regard to the orders of your Lordships' House. After the attack which has been made by the noble and gallant Marquess, I trust your Lordships will permit me to answer that attack. He says that these rewards—these medals—are prostituted—that is, prostitution of these medals to the officers who were not field-officers, the sergeants, the private soldiers, who fought in those numerous battles in the Peninsula—the men who led the forlorn hope at Badajoz, at Ciudad Rodrigo, and at St. Sebastian—the men who fought in those great sea battles which we shall ever look back to with pride in the history of our country. Prostitution, forsooth! Prostitution of those medals to the soldiers who gained for the noble Marquess the medals for the actions in the Peninsula, which he wears, and with which he is decorated. I say that the noble Marquess and the other officers who commanded regiments were justly entitled to their well-earned rewards; but I claim for those who have not had the good fortune to be in the highest branch of their profession, but who dedicated their best energies and shed their best blood for their country, I claim for them this decoration. Squeezed out of the Government! It was no such thing. The war officers petitioned Her Majesty. Her Majesty referred their petition to Her confidential advisers. The noble Marquess now complains that the medals should not be given at all because they were not given at the proper time. Because you have been guilty of gross injustice to these veteran soldiers and sailors, is that a reason why you should not now do right? Her Majesty ordered these medals. I have ever given the greatest credit to Her Majesty's Government for the advice which they gave to Her Majesty. The noble Marquess supposes that I shall not be popular in the Army, because I bring forward this question. I never did anything in this House for the purpose of making myself popular. I have always done my duty—and I will continue to do that according to my conscience. I will support the veteran officers and soldiers of the late war when I think them right, even if a thousand of your Lordships were to get up and say that I was seeking a prostitution. I believe that the officers, soldiers, and sailors of the late war will be proud of these medals, for they will be a proof that they were present in those battles which shed such glory on the British arms.

The MARQUESS of LONDONDERRY: One word in explanation. I must say, that if I used the word prostitution, it was in reference to recent rewards which have been bestowed, and which I referred to the other night, and not in reference to the grant of these medals. The noble Duke says, "If a thousand of your Lordships stood up against him, he would still support this cause." No one can doubt the noble Duke. I question only the policy of the measure. I am satisfied that the major part of these officers will not care much for it.

Subject at an end.

MARRIAGE (SCOTLAND) BILL—REGISTERING BIRTHS, &c. (SCOTLAND) BILL.

LORD CAMPBELL said, that he must now earnestly entreat their Lordships' attention for a short time whilst he explained the provisions of these two Bills, which were of the greatest importance to that part of the United Kingdom to which he belonged. It was not often that Scotland demanded much of their Lordships' time. Ireland occupied a great deal more, and therefore he hoped that the House would not grudge him a few minutes whilst he called their Lordships' attention to these two Bills. It was the more necessary that he should make some detailed statement on this occasion, as both these measures had been greatly misunderstood or greatly misrepresented in Scotland. They could not be regarded in any political aspect—their consideration involved no party dispute—they were simply two Bills intended for the improvement of the social condition of Scotland. The object of one—the Bill for the Registration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages in Scotland—was to extend to that country the measure of 1836, which had been found to work so beneficially in England. At that time he had the honour to be Attorney General, and it was his duty to carry the measures on those subjects in reference to England through the House of Commons. He found very little difficulty in that task, for the English people almost unanimously agreed that those measures were necessary; and he was utterly unable to understand and to account for the number of petitions which had been presented against the present Bills from the northern part of the kingdom. In every parish of Scotland there was, it was true, what was called a registry, but it was utterly useless; and it must be superseded, and a different system established. In every parish there was a parish registry kept by the session-clerk; but that did not contain a registration of births, but only of baptisms, and only of such baptisms as took place under the superintendence of the clergy of the Established Church of Scotland; and he was sorry to say that he could hardly venture to state that now the majority of the population of Scotland existed within the pale of the Established Church. According to the law of Scotland no religious ceremony was necessary for the purpose of rendering a marriage complete; and it so happened that no perfect registry of marriages existed in that part of the United Kingdom. Even in those cases in Scotland where religious ceremonies were used at marriages, the number of religious denominations into which Scotland was divided rendered the maintenance of such a register a matter of no small difficulty, for the population was divided into Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Free Churchmen, Independents, and several other divisions; the marriage register therefore, as it now existed, was not of much use. According to the measure before their Lordships, there would be in Scotland a general registry for every county presided over by a superintendent, and the whole registry of Scotland would be under the direction of a general superintendent at Edinburgh. Under this Bill, also, measures would be taken to render compulsory a registration of births, deaths, and marriages; and when any such registration should be effected, it would impose upon the party making it no expense beyond a penny for the postage of a letter, or the trouble of sending a messenger a short distance. When he said that no expense was to be incurred, he thought that the fitting opportunity to notice some rumours that had gone abroad upon this subject. It was said that a very heavy assessment was to be laid upon the people of Scotland for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the proposed plan. What was the fact? The Chancellor of the Exchequer consented, as he had done with regard to England, that all the expenses should be paid out of the public Treasury, except the sum of 2*s.* 6*d.* compensation to the registrar: that expense it was intended should be borne by Scotland; and what did the House suppose it was estimated that those charges would amount to? No more than 8,500*l.* for the whole of Scotland. In that part of the United Kingdom there were 900 or 1,000 parishes, and that sum distributed amongst them would not be much to each. Here he thought it right to observe that, by the measure now before their Lordships, the session-clerks would not in any respect be affected. The Bill would not affect their emoluments; but as to awarding compensation to other parties who might suffer, it would be impossible to award anything in the shape of compensation until the amount of loss could previously be ascertained. He now came to the Marriage Bill, which was a matter still more misunderstood. Upon this subject he need scarcely remind their Lordships that it was necessary so to legislate for Scotland, as that the measure before them should carry out in the most effectual manner possible the main purpose for which marriage was instituted. They ought so to legislate as that there should be no doubt whatever of the fact—no uncertainty as to whether in a particular case a marriage did or did not exist; and every facility should be given for proving it at any time. In Scotland at present a man could scarcely tell whether he was married or not. Boys of fourteen, and girls of twelve, might contract matrimony without the consent of their parents or guardians, and without being resident in the locality where they were so married. The law of marriage in Scotland was most anomalous; there was nothing like it in any civilised country. There were four modes of effecting marriages in Scotland. The first was a religious rite, before a minister; the second was, without a clergyman, the parties acknowledging themselves before witnesses to be man and wife; the third, by a promise proved; and there was yet a fourth, marriage by repute, where, if parties were believed to be man and wife from their conduct, they were held, at any distance of time, to be married. He knew it had often been said, that under this system the Scotch were still a moral people. No one could feel a greater pride or pleasure than he did in repeating the assertion that the people of Scotland were a moral community; but their morality existed, not in consequence, but in despite, of their marriage law. Although cases of seduction were not frequent in Scotland, yet he fully believed that the existing state of the marriage law greatly facilitated seduction. Again, persons who cohabited together without being married, did often for decency sake give to each other the title of husband and wife, and to all appearance did stand towards each other in that relation, and after the lapse of a short time—say a few years—such parties ceased to live together, declaring that they never had been married; hence a vast amount of litigation, as the appeals which came before their Lordships from Scotland abundantly testified. It was therefore proposed by this Bill to institute a fixed and known process by which this rite might be accomplished. There would, in future, if this Bill ever passed, be only two ways by which marriage could be contracted. The first, a religious rite, celebrated by a clergyman; and the second, a civil contract, entered into before a public functionary—the registrar. In the first case special licenses would only be allowed after a certain residence, and with the consent of guardians—a process which would put a stop to all clandestine marriages; and in the second case, due notice would be required to be posted in various public places. Now, his countrymen, the Scotch, had such a horror of innovation, that it was scarcely possible to effect any improvement; and, accordingly, there had been a strenuous opposition raised on various grounds, strong enough to prevent the passing of a similar Bill last Session. This opposition had now, however, much subsided, and he hoped the measures would this Session be passed. The noble

Lord opposite had proposed that the Bills should be referred to a Select Committee, and to that course he should not object, as there were several verbal alterations which were required. His Lordship concluded by moving that the Bills be now read a second time.

LORD BROUGHAM briefly seconded the Motion. With regard to marriages by registrars, he took the opportunity of saying, that he considered that in England that innovation had been a failure, or nearly so. The people generally—and the Dissenters, for whose relief the measure was passed particularly—preferred being married in the good old way in the churches of their forefathers. He ridiculed the system of publishing bans, and considered the posting of the bans on the church and meeting-house doors, as enacted by the present Bill, a great improvement, and one which he himself had suggested in a Bill introduced in 1835. The noble Lord took the opportunity of stating, with relation to Gretna Green marriages, the curious fact, that at one period, the Lord President of the Council, the Lord Chancellor, and the Lord Privy Seal, the three highest officers of the Crown, were all married at Gretna Green.

The EARL of SELKIRK said, that though it was not his intention to put their Lordships to the trouble of dividing upon the subject, yet, in regard to the Registration Bill, he should, with a view to placing hereafter his protest against that measure on the journals of the House, move that it be read a second time that day six months. The Bill inflicted penalties on parties for not doing that which it was physically impossible to accomplish; and he must say that he thought the object of the Bill might be obtained by some other measure than this—that, for instance, the parish register might be made quite efficient for the purpose required at much less cost, and without the vast addition of machinery provided by the measure under discussion. The noble Earl then moved the Amendment, repeating that it was not his intention to divide the House.

The EARL of EGLINTOUN observed, that though he did not object to the principle of a registration, still he did object to the principle on which it was proposed that this registration should be carried out. He had very great objection to the vast amount of patronage that would be created under the Bill; to the great number of officers to be appointed under it, and which could scarcely be calculated at less than 2,000. But another reason for his objections to this measure of registration was, that he could not but think that the present machinery, with the addition of a clerk here and there, would be quite sufficient for the purpose, although he was quite ready to admit that registration, to be effectual, should be compulsory. The noble Earl was understood to entertain no material objection to the Marriage Bill. He hoped that great alterations, however, would be made in the registration measure by the Committee; if not, he should offer opposition to it on the third reading.

The EARL of ABERDEEN did not see that there was any such connexion between these two measures as to make it necessary for the noble and learned Lord (Lord Campbell) to move them both together. He admitted that it was desirable to have a complete system of registration of births, deaths, and marriages in Scotland; but they should take care that they were not made, as they might be, to pay too dearly for that advantage. If the Marriage Act was defective, let it be improved; but by no means let them interfere with a subject of such vital importance as the law of marriage for the mere purpose of improving registration. The noble Earl recommended the postponement, for the present, of the Bill relating to marriages, as he was not aware that, so far as Scotland was concerned, there was any general complaint of the working of the present law on that subject. At all events, it was not at all necessary to proceed with the Marriage Bill with the view to the success of the other measure.

The DUKE of ARGYLL, in reference to the Registration Bill, objected greatly to the principle of centralisation which it embodied. The measure as it stood, in fact, would destroy all local power, and confer nearly unlimited powers on the central authority. Let him remind their Lordships, too, that in England the introduction of the centralisation principle into the administration of the poor-law had added greatly to the expenses of the poor-rates; and they would find, he feared, that this Bill would produce a similar effect in Scotland. With respect to the Marriage Bill, he objected to the clause which provided that parties, after being married by a clergyman, should be under the necessity of going before the registrar at all, inasmuch as that would tend to reduce marriage to a mere civil contract. He thought that the certificate of the clergyman, in clerical marriages, should be sufficient to authorise the registration.

The DUKE of MONTROSE was understood to say that he did not see why persons married by the clergy should have to go before the registrar at all, and to express his hope that the measure would be much improved in Committee.

Amendment negatived,

Bills read 2^{a}.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, June 9, 1848.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—1^{o} Spirits (Dealers in); Highland Roads, Bridges, &c. (Scotland); British Spirits Warehousing; Public Works (Ireland), (No. 2).

Reported.—Administration of Justice (No. 1); Administration of Justice (No. 2); Protection of Justices from Vexatious Actions.

3^{o} and passed;—Game Certificates for Killing Hares (Scotland).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Bright, Mr. Sharman Crawford, and other Hon. Members, from an Immense Number of Places, for an Extension of the Elective Franchise.—By Mr. Bright, from the Parishes of Radcliffe and Prestwich (Lancaster), for the Abolition of Church Rates.—By Mr. George Thompson, from Members of the Baptist Congregation of Church Street, Stoke-upon-Trent, for Discouragement of Idolatry in India.—By Lord Henry Bentinck, from Arnold (Nottingham), and by other Hon. Members, from several Places, for Better Observance of the Lord's Day.—By Mr. Robert Tennent, from the Presbytery of Templepatrick (Ireland), in favour of the Places of Worship Sites (Scotland) Bill.—By Mr. Charles Villiers, from the Directors of the General Life and Fire Insurance Company, London, for a Repeal of the Duty on Fire Insurances.—By Mr. Cowan, from the Clergy, Physicians, and Merchants, of the City of Perth, for Exemption of Charitable Bequests from the Legacy Duties.

NAVIGATION LAWS—ADJOURNED DEBATE.

LORD G. BENTINCK resumed the Adjourned Debate on the Navigation Laws, and said: Sir, in asking the indulgence of the House while I make some observations on the great and important subject which is now under discussion, I would wish, in the first place, to proceed to remove some of those prejudices created against British shipowners, or rather, I should say, the captains of the British mercantile marine, by the hon. Member for Westbury (Mr. Wilson). It is not my intention to impute to that hon. Gentleman, who I regret is not now in his place, the slightest wish or desire to misrepresent the true state of facts as regards the captains of British merchantmen, whom he described as being unable to obtain freights from Rio Janeiro on account of the bad character which they bear for carelessness in the carriage or delivery of the goods entrusted to them. I do not say that the hon. Member intended to convey a general libel on the shipowners and captains of the British mercantile marine; but I am in a position to give a special contradiction to the facts of his statement as regards certain British ships at Rio Janeiro; and I believe I shall be able without any imputation on the honesty of the hon. Member for Westbury, to offer a solution for those great mistakes which he has made. I had the honour of sitting on a Committee with the hon. Member for Westbury; and I may say in his absence that I never acted with one more fair, honest, or straightforward than the hon. Member, and I never met on his part with any disposition to misrepresent or take unfair advantage, and I am sure intentionally he would never have cast the imputation which he has cast on the character of British captains and shipowners. I am in a position, however, to refute the hon. Member's allegations, having in my posession an extract of a letter from the agents for one of these very A 1 ships, which were represented, for the reasons imputed by the hon. Member for Westbury, to be utterly unable to obtain freights. I have been favoured with a letter from Mr. R. Wynn, of Liverpool, the agent for the ship in question. She arrived at Rio Janeiro on the 10 or 11th of March. So far from being unable to obtain a cargo on account of the carelessness of her captain, she had refused freight at 75*s.* for Hamburgh, for Cowes, and for Stettin. Finally, she left Rio, not because she was unable to obtain a cargo from the badness of her character, but because, while foreign vessels were taking cargoes at 57*s.* 6*d.* from Rio, she was not content to take even 80*s.*; and on the 4th of April she left Rio for Bahia, where there is not the least doubt that Captain Young, the master of the vessel, has been able to prove to his employers at home that he was wide awake to their interests, by getting a still better freight than that he refused at Rio Janeiro. With regard to the fact stated by the hon. Member for Westbury, of eight British ships being unable to obtain freights at Rio, I find that while twelve or thirteen British ships had all obtained freight, there were eight foreign ships which had not got freights; and among them I observe two American ships, though the Americans have means of obtaining freights which are not held to be consistent with the honour and morality of Englishmen. I find that out of those American ships which obtained freight, five were for the African coast slavers no doubt. This being the case I must conclude that the simple solution of the story, which is totally unfounded in fact, is that some jealous rival of the hon. Member for Westbury must have sought to practise a joke upon him by making an "April fool" of the hon. Gentleman. The letter bears date the 1st of April.

With reference to the statement made by the hon. Gentleman, that shippers would not take British ships because their captains were careless of the cargoes, I will read to the House a letter from Messrs. Le Breton and Wakling, dated Bahia, 10th April, 1848. [The letter stated that there was a great want of vessels there at that time; that there were 22,000 packages of sugar waiting at Bahia to be exported; and that there were not ships to carry one-sixth part of that quantity. It said that the British brig *Herald* went away for Hamburgh with a cargo at 87*s.* 6*d.*; that the British barque *Golden Fleece* left with a cargo at 80*s.*; that another followed with a cargo at 87*s.* 6*d.*; and that the British brig *Hibbert* had just arrived from Rio, and would no doubt immediately depart from Bahia with a full cargo at 90*s.* for Cowes.] Therefore it would appear that these incapable and careless captains were looking sharp after the interests of their employers and obtaining the highest freights. The reason that they did not get freights at Rio was, that they were not such fools as to accept 57*s.* 6*d.* freight when they might run before the trade wind and get 90*s.* at Bahia. But what do Messrs. Le Breton and Wakling say? They state, that after these vessels were freighted, nothing would remain at Bahia but a Hanoverian schooner and a French brig; so that all the English vessels were cleared off, and those remaining behind unemployed were one French and one Hanoverian ship.

I now take the liberty of addressing myself to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade; and I fully give him credit for sincerity when he declared, "that if he thought any risk would arise to our mercantile marine, or the naval glory of England, in consequence of the repeal of the navigation laws, he would rather cut off his right hand than lay those resolutions upon the table of the House." The right hon. Gentleman having made this declaration, proceeded to prove, to his own satisfaction at least, as well as that of his friends around him, that all our alarm on this point was utterly futile, and that neither the naval glory of England, nor her mercantile marine, would suffer by the proposed alteration. The right hon. Gentleman drew a comparison between the shipping of this country and that of the United States in the years 1827 and 1846, to show that the British mercantile marine had increased 44 per cent beyond the increase of the mercantile marine of the United States; and well might the right hon. Gentleman scoff at the fears of those who apprehend competition with the United States of America, if such were really the fact. But again, without impugning the right hon. Gentleman's good faith, I shall be obliged to show that he is entirely mistaken in the facts which he has alleged. I shall also be obliged to quarrel with the right hon. Gentleman's arithmetic, and with the length of his measure, because the right hon. Gentleman was not only mistaken in his calculation, the data of which he gave to the House, but left out of view that when he measured the increase of tonnage of the British mercantile marine engaged in the foreign trade, he measured it by the new method of admeasurement, which was introduced by the late Lord Sydenham, and by which something like 20 per cent was added to the tonnage of ships engaged in foreign trade. Under the new law of tonnage, a ship that measured 400 tons under the old system, now measures nearly 500 tons. But the mode of measuring the tonnage of the United States' ships remains the same, and therefore when the right hon. Gentleman took an ell measure to gauge the tonnage of the United States, and only a yard to measure British ships, it was no wonder that he made it out that British tonnage had increased 44 per cent, in comparison with the tonnage of the United States. The right hon. Gentleman stated that British shipping, which measured 2,460,500 tons in 1827, had risen in 1846 to 3,817,112 tons. But if an allowance be made for the new measure, which I can show the House (though there is no exact or official report of the difference) amounts to nearly 20 per cent more in appearance than the old, it will be seen that these 3,817,112 tons of shipping, showing apparently an increase of 1,365,612 tons, or 55 per cent, by reducing the new measure to the old standard, stand at 3,053,690 tons, being an increase not of 55 per cent, but of 24 per cent. I will not quarrel with the right hon. Gentleman because he took a different period of the year for the United States shipping from that which he took for the British shipping. I will not quarrel with him because he took the 30th of June, 1846, for the United States, and the end of the year for Great Britain, which was a time when there was a great increase in the amount of shipping of all kinds, as well American as British engaged in the carrying trade with the United States. I will only say, that if he had taken a year later for his data, the difference would not have been more than 11 per cent. Had he taken the 30th of June, 1847, the increase in American ships would have been 276,965 tons. But taking his own figures, it appears that the United States' shipping had increased since the year 1827, from 1,620,607 tons, to 2,62,084 tons; being an increase of 941,477 tons. Now that is an increase of 58 per cent. According to the right hon. Gentleman's own figures, the increase of English shipping had been only 55, while the increase of American shipping had been 58 per cent; and how he could make out that the British shipping had surpassed the American shipping, I am utterly at a loss to understand. But the real fact is this—that measured by the same gauge —not measured by a short gauge for England, and a long one for the United States — the shipping of the United States has increased 58 per cent, while British shipping has increased only 24 per cent. I therefore maintain that the British shipowner, without showing any pusillanimity, any want of energy or enterprise, has good reason to fear the rivalship of the shipowner of the United States, if the latter should be admitted to our colonial trade.

I shall now proceed to show that I have not on light grounds stated the difference between the new and the old system of measuring vessels in this country. I hold in my hand an account of vessels measured under the new and under the old system, in the port of Liverpool. There are nine of these vessels, five of which belong to Mr. Chapman, and four to Mr. Bold. Mr. Chapman's five ships measured, under the old scale, 3,928 tons, and under Mr. Poulett Thomson's scale, 4,768 tons; showing a difference of 840 tons. Mr. Bold's four ships measured under the old scale 2,974 tons, and under the new scale 3,508 tons, showing a difference of 534 tons. The total increase of measurement in the nine vessels, under the new system, as compared with the old, amounts to a fraction under 20 per cent.

It is said that the British mercantile marine has nothing to fear from the rivalry of America in our colonies. Sir, the *American Almanac* gives an official account of the trade of the United States with all the nations of the world; and I shall take from that almanac a statement of the American trade with the British empire and our transmarine possessions. I find that there entered in the year 1846 into the ports of the United States, 1,360,374 tons of American shipping; and there entered in the same year only 801,321 tons of shipping belonging to Great Britain and her colonial possessions. But as I am on this point I should wish to draw the attention of the British West India planters to the benefit which they are likely to derive from a repeal of the navigation laws. The intercolonial trade has been thrown open to its present extent about twenty-four years; and the result is that the trade between the United States and the British West Indies in 1846 was carried on by 124,135 tons of American shipping, and only 23,342 tons of British shipping. Now let us see how the case stands as regards Cuba and the Spanish West Indies. We are told that the United States make reciprocity treaties with Bremen and the Hanse Towns. But what portion of the trade with the Spanish colonies have the United States got? I find that in the year 1846 the trade of the United States with the Spanish colonies was carried on in 208,189 tons of American shipping, and 23,891 tons of foreign shipping. I have also a statement of the value of the merchandise so carried, and from that statement it appears that the value for the merchandise carried in American vessels amounted to 2,500,000*l.*, while the value of the merchandise carried in foreign ships amounted to no more than 27,000*l.* When, therefore, America proposes to foreign States to divide with them their colonial trade, we can judge pretty well from these facts which party will get the larger share of the spoil.

Sir, I am at a loss to learn from all the speeches I have heard, any just ground for making this great change. We have, to be sure, heard of petitions from Canada and from the British West Indies. But I believe that on more calm consideration Jamaica is not very anxious for the repeal of the navigation laws. True it is that in a moment of excitement, suffering under your free-trade experiments, like drowning men catching at straws, the British West India planters asked for a repeal of those laws. I have reason, however, to think that their opinion on the subject has of late undergone a considerable change. Within the last few days I received an extract from a letter addressed by the President of the Chamber of Commerce at Kingston—the only chamber of commerce in Jamaica—to his agent in London; and that extract I shall now read to the House. I must, first, however, observe that the writer of the letter is one of those who, about six months or twelve months ago, petitioned in favour of a repeal of the navigation laws. The extract in question is as follows:—

> "The Chamber is inclined to agree with Lord George Bentinck and yourself that the repeal of the navigation laws is calculated to confer an equal benefit on our opponents and on ourselves, with this additional circumstance in favour of the Cuban planter, that much greater despatch is attainable there where slave labour ensures regularity in the crops, while in Jamaica the comparatively few vessels that now trade to the island are detained many months before a cargo is obtained. It is not unlikely, therefore, that the competition to be opened by a repeal of the navigation laws would be of more service to the Cuban than to the British planter."

Further to show the effect of the proposed change on the West India interest, allow me to quote from a letter written by Mr. James Cooke, an extensive sugar broker in the City, a gentleman well known to the Members both of the late and of the present Government; he gives an account of a number of ships now lying in the river or in the Channel with cargoes of sugar. They carry, altogether, 16,927 boxes of Cuban sugar. They are unable, under the navigation laws, to land that sugar here, and therefore it must be sold for foreign markets, or refined for exportation. I must remind hon. Gentlemen opposite that this is a question for the conciliation of the West India colonies, and that they propose to pass this measure in order to preserve the affection of those colonies. Mr. Cooke says "that he is trying to dispose of those cargoes, but that the price of the sugar will be diminished by 2*s.* per cwt., in consequence of its being in a foreign and not in a British bottom, and on that account not admissible for consumption into this country." If, therefore, those among the West Indian planters, who are foolish enough to ask for a repeal of the navigation laws, could have their will, they would have to meet in the British market 16,900 additional boxes of Cuban sugar, which could be sold at 2*s.* less than at present. But Mr. Cooke is not the only evidence I have upon this point. Mr. Joshua Wilson, of Sunderland, one of the Society of "Friends," was examined before the Committee in the House of Lords. He has four or five ships, and is, I believe, largely engaged in the grocery trade. He is strongly in favour of a repeal of the navigation laws; but when asked to specify the disadvantages and injury to the commerce of this country arising out of those laws, he answered, "his trade was very much with the Baltic, and he was not able to say he knew of any great injuries that had arisen." It appears, however, that in the year 1846 he did suffer considerably from the operation of the navigation laws. There were, at that time, a number of American and Spanish ships lying in the river, loaded with Cuban sugar. The Sugar Duties Act had just been passed—it was in the month of July or August; and the witness, who gave his evidence with great candour, stated that he purchased a parcel of slave-grown sugar out of one of these American bottoms, under the impression that the law would permit him to sell it again as ship's stores. The navigation laws foiled him. That was the only great grievance he had to complain of; "Friend" Wilson was consequently obliged to keep, and is still obliged to keep, that sugar unsold, its value being reduced to the extent of 6*s.* or 7*s.* per cwt. by the operation of the navigation laws. The effect of the repeal, then, of these laws, concurrently with the alteration of the sugar duties, would have been, according to "Friend" Wilson, to lower the average price of slave-grown sugar between 5*s.* and 6*s.* per cwt. Now, if the West India planters should be fools enough to ask for a repeal of the navigation laws, when they are told by those who seek their repeal, that this would be the effect of such a measure, I can only say that they will deserve their fate. Mr. Wilson was afterwards asked "whether he believed that the West India planters would get freights much cheaper if the navigation laws were repealed, and whether that would be a great benefit to them?" His answer was, "that, if that was the opinion of the West

India planters, they would find their mistake." So it appears, that the British West Indians would not get freights any cheaper, while the planters of Cuba would be able to sell their sugar here at prices between 5*s.* and 6*s.* per cwt. lower than at present.

There is another petition which I think it necessary to notice. It is one on which the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade lays the greatest stress —a petition from the city of London. I am not surprised, in the paucity of petitions in favour of the Government proposal for the repeal of the navigation laws, that the right hon. Gentleman should have done so. I believe there are only about half-a-dozen altogether, signed by about 3,000 persons. I am not surprised that the right hon. Gentleman should make much of a petition from the city of London, although it had but 292 signatures. No petition, I believe, ever came from the city of London so shabbily signed. Among the signatures, I am told, there are not more than seven or eight names that anybody knows; and that the only really distinguished names attached to the petition are those of the Governor and the Deputy Governor of the Bank of England. When Gentlemen have read the evidence reported yesterday to the House, and learnt the weight given by the Secret Committee upstairs to the opinions of the Governor and Deputy Governor of the Bank of England, opposed as they are to the evidence of seventeen witnesses on the other side, it will be able better to judge of their comparative value. The fact of the Governor and Deputy Governor of the Bank having signed the petition, is no doubt a matter worthy of some consideration on the part of the House. But when the House has read the petition to which, after seven months' consideration, the Governor and Deputy Governor of the Bank have appended their names, it will be more surprised that any attention should have been given to their opinions in the Commercial Distress Committee, than that any great weight should have been attached to the sentiments expressed in the petition for the repeal of the navigation laws, because to that petition are attached the names of the Governor and Deputy Governor of the Bank of England. That petition, it appears, has been the means of withdrawing from our (the Protectionist) ranks the new Member for West Somersetshire (Mr. Moody); and I am not at all surprised that the petition, signed by the Governor and Deputy Governor of the Bank of England, should have led the hon. Member to desert our ranks and join the other side of the House; for, according to the statements of this petition, the navigation laws have done nothing for us, but everything against us. The petition say, "that these navigation laws have been the means of lessening the supply of cotton from India, not only to England, but to all Europe, and have taken it from India, giving the culture of cotton wholly to the United States and Brazil." Now, according to the hon. Gentleman the Member for Westbury (Mr. Wilson), 2*s.* 6*d.* a ton was the outside of the increase to the cost of freight caused by the navigation laws; 2*s.* 6*d.* a ton is the eighteenth part of a farthing per lb., and this, it is represented, has driven the cultivation of cotton from India to the United States of America. Mr. Burke, in former days, found amid all the difficulties of Government one of the greatest to be 3,000 miles of sea that intervened between it and the colonies. That difficulty yet remained, but the Governor and Deputy Governor of the Bank of England were going to pump the sea dry. They said in their petition—

> "Under circumstances so invigorating, the extension of manufactures, navigation, colonial production, trade, warehousing, and emigration, together with their subsidiary employments, would be illimitable, and the social and material benefits accruing therefrom to this great and densely populated empire would be boundless; their effect might be truly compared to lessening the extent of the intervening seas and oceans, not only between Great Britain and surrounding nations, but between the former and her numerous colonies and dependencies."

Now if the repeal of the navigation laws could produce such an effect, the advantages that would be conferred upon our commerce would be even much greater than those set forth by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade. The noble Lord the First Minister of the Crown will probably expatiate upon other unknown advantages to be derived from the passing of this measure at a later period of the evening; but until I read the petition of the Governor and Deputy Governor of the Bank of England, I confess I was at a loss to know what the nature of those advantages were which the country was to gain for making this great change in her laws and national policy. It appears, then, that these are the advantages which we are promised by the repeal of the navigation laws; and I am ready to concur in this sentiment, that when the seas are dried up, as these 292 petitioners from the city of London anticipate, the elements of immeasurable wealth will be brought into operation; and those distant countries which only suffer from the want of labour will offer a field for the enterprise of our labourers, and a home to countless numbers of the poor of this country. The petition proceeds to say of these countries—

> "Many possess all the means of immeasurable wealth, but suffer only from the scarcity of labour, offering in their settlement the most bountiful and congenial fields for the enterprising capitalist, and a happy home, with employment, for any conceivable number of our industrious but unoccupied poor, who, by the repeal of the navigation laws would have much greater facilities of bettering their condition by emigration, instead of being maintained out of parochial and other eleemosynary funds in a hopeless and daily increasing state of destitution, the redundancy or the scarcity of labour being alike a great social evil, and demanding prompt and serious consideration."

Now, Sir, I can well understand why the millowners are so very anxious for the repeal of these laws. I saw, Sir, that a memorial had been presented to the Board of Trade from fifty millowners, praying that the numberless operatives unhappily thrown out of employment within the last two years may be—I will not say transported, but—deported to foreign countries to grow cotton, employment being no longer to be found for them here in our manufactories. This memorial has been presented to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, who, no doubt, looks forward to the deportation of thousands of these unemployed operatives from Lancashire. Such a deportation of unemployed operatives being in their contemplation, these Lancashire millowners must doubtless feel a great desire to shorten the intervening distance between England and her colonies.

I am now going, Sir, to make a speech for the other side of the House, inasmuch as they have not as yet said anything for themselves. I will show to you upon the authority of 292 city of London petitioners, the real mischiefs of these navigation laws, little as you seem to think them. Sir, here we have the Governor and the Deputy Governor of the Bank of England, who at least ought to know pretty well what the amount of the national debt is, saying that—

> "By the discouraging and restrictive tendency of the navigation laws upon British commerce, vast sums of capital are invested without any advantage to this country, because they are diverted to certain foreign loans and schemes, and are often totally lost to the owners. These would otherwise be profitably embarked in extending British manufactures, British industry, colonial productions, our navigation, and free trade."

So that if 150,000,000*l.* were invested and lost in foreign loans and schemes in the manner described last year by the noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, it is the opinion of the Governor and the Deputy Governor of the Bank of England that that loss has been incurred entirely through the mischievous operation of our navigation laws. They say—

> "Had not those navigation laws existed, those grievous social sufferings which for ages past have been periodically endured by our unemployed poor and their families would not have occurred; nor would those astounding annual sums which have been exacted for more than two centuries from the property of the country, added to the overwhelming amount subscribed in charity, making an aggregate exceeding the amount of the national debt, have been sunk in unproductive, unprofitable speculations, nor would millions have been spent in the punishment of crime; but much the larger portion of this money would have been more usefully employed at home, and would have fructified in the hands of the people."

Now, Sir, I have stated more fully than any of the Members of the Government opposite the advantages that are likely to accrue from a repeal of the navigation laws. And, certainly, we, the Protectionist party, left, as you see, in rather a small minority, have much to answer for in thus interrupting the further progress of free trade, and preventing the benefits which are likely to result from a repeal of the navigation laws, if by their repeal we could dry up the ocean, and save in the next 200 years more than 800,000,000*l.* of money by the employment of our starving poor, and hundreds of millions more in the prevention of crime.

Sir, I regret I do not see the noble Lord the Member for Windsor (Lord J. Hay) who has taken a prominent part in the debate in his place. That noble Lord has joined in the clamour against the seamen, the marines, the captains, and the mates in our mercantile service. I did not exactly understand a portion of his observations; but I understood him to say, that he had had 270 merchant ships under his control when employed in command off the coast of Portugal in 1839—"that many disputes had then arisen between the captains and men in the mercantile service, which were most difficult to settle—that the captains were always in the wrong—and that fifty of these men had retired from the mercantile navy, and sought refuge on board the Queen's ships." Why, Sir, one of the causes of dispute arises from the circumstance, that whenever a ship of war is at hand, the merchant seamen, having the privilege of leaving, without notice, the service of the merchantman in which they are engaged, and of enlisting on board the Queen's ship, practically have the captains of the merchant ships always at their mercy, and knowing it, they say, "If you do not satisfy us, we will go and volunteer into the Queen's ship;" and out of this very circumstance disputes which would not otherwise arise, do continually arise between a mercantile captain and his crew.

I see by a return laid upon the table of the House, that out of 202 ships of the Royal Navy in the years 1844 and 1845, there were in the one year 1,000 different punishments inflicted, and in the other year 1,400 different punishments, notwithstanding all the discipline of the Royal Navy. So that, with all our discipline, the number of punishments thus inflicted in the Royal Navy, has exceeded, four or fivefold, in proportion to ships, the number of alleged quarrels between the masters and mates in our mercantile ships. But the noble Lord, when he called attention to the conduct of the captains and mates of the mercantile service, astonished the Members on this side of the House more by the statements which followed his charge, than by the charge itself. The noble Lord, in answer to the able speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Oxfordshire (Mr. Henley), who so well analysed the reports of the consuls, said, with an emphasis and an action upon the red box suitable to the occasion, "that he was prepared to verify every sentence in the blue book." So that it appears the noble Lord is prepared to verify every sentence expressed by seventy consuls, many of whom have given the most contradictory reports. My hon. Friend the Member for Oxfordshire, the other night, told a good story for the purpose of illustrating the course pursued by hon. Members on the other side of the House. He said it reminded him of the conduct of a certain British seaman, who, when asked to give an opinion upon any particular subject, said "I don't know anything about it; but if Dick said it was so, I will swear to it." We have now actually a live Jack tar, in the person of the noble Lord, ready to swear to every sentence in this blue book. If the noble Lord had been here I should have liked to ask him to reconcile the contradictory statements that are herein contained. One consul, who it appears had only 200 or 300 seamen under his observation, writes his opinion thus:—"They are the most ignorant and brutal set of people I ever saw in my life, in the Baltic." Another consul, Mr. Brooker, says, "that for a period of fifty-nine years he has been consul at Cronstadt, and in the course of his consulate there came under his surveillance 25,000 ships, manned by 290,000 men; and," he adds—

> "I am bound to say that there have been very few quarrels of the people connected with these ships during all these fifty-nine years—there have only occurred two cases in which there was any occasion to send the parties up for trial. These parties were the captains and mates; and in both instances they were acquitted."

Consul Macgregor, from Elsineur, says, in the most frank and just manner, that—

> "Consuls, by the nature of the situation in which they are placed, can only see the shady side of the proceedings on board of ships. It is their duty to record accidents that happen in vessels upon their voyage. The seaman has an arduous duty to perform—to war, as it were, with the elements, to contend against which requires, sometimes, almost superhuman exertions."

But what does he say further, in respect to the cases which came before him?—

> "Shall a shipwreck or one dispute be made the grounds for the condemnation of this whole class? Scarcely twenty shipwrecks have happened in the Baltic within my experience, so that of the amount of the shipping which has passed to the Sound, scarcely twenty vessels have been lost out of 4,000 vessels that annually frequent these seas."

So that it appears by this gentleman's statement that scarcely twenty cases came before him, although the number of British seamen that annually passed through this part of the world was 30,000. Then we have 30,000 at Elsineur, and 290,000 seamen at Cronstadt, whose conduct has been thus reported upon. Are we, then, to be put down by the small talk of idle consuls? On almost every occasion, not the repeal of the navigation laws is sought for by those officers, but more power, and sometimes more pay. But recollect that the letters of the consuls were written in reply to a circular from Mr. Murray, which did not raise the question as between the two sides of good and ill conduct for their consideration. Mr. Murray appeared as the attorney-general for the prosecution, against the British mercantile marine as defendants. He asked nothing in regard to the good conduct of the seamen; he only desired to know of their misconduct. I do not hesitate to say that a letter, in my opinion, more atrocious, and one more calculated to libel and slander the British mariner of this country, could not have been written, and has never gone forth from the Foreign Office. But, Sir, after all, what do these consuls say? Why, that "the deportment of these seamen is inferior to that of the foreigner—that their orthography is bad, and their spelling all on a par." Why, good gracious! are we to condemn the seamen of England because they have not French manners, because they possess not the grace of Italians, of Sicilians, and of Sardinians? But when the noble Lord the Member for Windsor says "he is prepared to verify every sentence of these statements," I ask him is he prepared to verify those sentiments which contain encomiums upon the British seamen, and the contradictory sentiment expressed almost in the same breath that they are "utterly ignorant, drunken, and worthless?" But we have also a consul, Mr. Barclay, at New York, who says that the great difficulties standing in the way of the captains and mates whose conduct is so much impugned, arise from the want of proper discipline. He says that the contrast between the mercantile marine and the American marine is this, "that the latter still retain the power of inflicting corporal punishment." Now, I ask the noble Lord the Member for Windsor, is he prepared on the part of the Government, as well as to verify this information, to carry out the sentiment which accompanies it? Is the Government prepared to impose corporal punishment upon our mercantile navy? For, according to the suggestion of this gentleman, whose statements and sentiments the noble Lord, I presume, will readily verify, there ought to be the same kind of discipline adopted in our mercantile navy as they have in the American mercantile navy, to render the conduct and condition of our seamen equal to those of foreign seamen.

Sir, as I have heard no reason assigned, nor any grounds shown, for this great alteration in our laws, I am at a loss to understand the inducements which hon. Members opposite have for supporting this measure. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford (Mr. Gladstone) has made a very ingenious speech, as he always does; and, but that it happened in the outset that he announced his intention of supporting Ministers, I confess that if I had only come into the House after the commencement of his speech, I should have thought that he was arguing in favour of our side of the question. To be sure I was a little surprised at hearing him say, "that reciprocity was the rule of action in this country." I was surprised to hear fall from the right hon. Gentleman a condemnation of the Government, "that they had gone hand over head, and had proposed to repeal the navigation laws without first bargaining for reciprocity." Why, good God! what was the Act of 1846? Was it not free trade without reciprocity? What were we here, in opposition, striving for and complaining of, but that we were giving to foreigners free trade without securing reciprocity for ourselves? It was the good old rule in former times, but was abandoned in 1846, and we are now reaping the true consequence in a ruined trade and a starving population. Sir, I am sorry the right hon. Gentleman is not here in his place; indeed, it appears that none of those Gentlemen who have taken an active part in this debate, except the right hon. Gentleman opposite, the President of the Board of Trade, have condescended to hear what their opponents have to say in answer to them. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford has discovered that, whilst, in his opinion, the British mercantile marine could compete with any other mercantile marine in the world—that the position of the British merchant and seamen, as regards steam navigation at all events, is entirely unapproachable. He is, I think, about as well informed on this subject as he is respecting the prices of timber and other articles of commerce. It appears by a return that has been laid on the table of this House, with the name of Mr. Wawn on the back of it, that the steam tonnage, built and registered in the United Kingdom, was—

	Steam Ships.	Tonnage.
In 1846	77	15,000
1847	103	16,000

I have a return of the ships and tonnage of the United States, by which I find that there were built there, in 1844, 103 steamers; in 1845, 163; in 1846, 235; and in 1847, 198 steamers. Now, I am not able to state what the tonnage of these steamers is, because as regards them they are mixed up with sailing vessels; but I find in the corresponding years, excluding sloops and canal boats, there were built in the United States of America—

	Sailing Ships.	Tonnage.
In 1844	324	90,982
1845	533	126,628
1846	1,075	172,227
1847	1,118	226,082

Thus in the course of those four years there have been 699 steamers built, with 3,119 two and three masted sailing vessels, measuring 615,929 tons. I am not able to tell the tonnage of the steamboats generally, but I am able to tell the tonnage of twelve sea-going steamers that were built and launched at New York in 1847, and that of fourteen others to be launched in the current year. Those twelve ships built at New York measured 16,288 tons. So that in 1847 alone, in sea-going steamers of 600 tons and upwards—I have taken no river steamers, and none under 600 tons—there were 12 built and launched at New York exceeding the united tonnage of all the vessels built in the United Kingdom in 1847. The 14 steamers now on the stocks have a united tonnage of 23,000 tons, so that in the course of two years there have been, or are being built at New York alone twenty-six sea-going steam ships, with a tonnage of 40,000 tons. Now what does the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxford say to this statement, after coming down with his authority to assist the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, and to assure us, misleading the House by his assertion, "that this country is unapproachable in the matter of steam vessels built and building?" This is the very point of all others in which the United States is now outstripping us.

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester (Mr. Milner Gibson), I am also sorry to say, is not here. He was pleased to allege that I had charged him with some fraud in the arrangement or getting out of certain returns which were laid on the table of the House by command of Her Majesty. Sir, I took the liberty of interrupting him when he made this charge, denying that I had ever laid such an accusation against him; it must have been some inward monitor that accused him—"that conscience" which "doth make cowards of us all." He might exclaim—

> "I would forget it, fain,
> But, Oh! it presses to my memory,
> Like damned guilty deeds to sinners' minds;"

and the right hon. Gentleman may know that it was he who gave instructions to Mr. Porter of the Board of Trade "to take" the Queen's name "in vain" and put it to a document which turns out fallacious, and having done this may have justly felt that he was guilty of no slight offence in the eyes of the country. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade endeavoured to explain it away, and the ex-Vice-President, Sir George Clerk, with a fellow feeling, followed in the same track: he said these returns were prepared as continuations of the returns prepared by Mr. Young, in 1844, although these returns drawn up in 1844 were substantially and practically different. Mr. Young had nothing in his returns of such headings as "protected and unprotected trade"—he studiously kept out the steamboat navigation, indeed it was one of his special objects to distinguish between the steamboats and the sailing-boats. Now, it stood on evidence given by Mr. Porter, on his oath in the House of Lords, that he made those returns by order of the right hon. Gentleman the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, whilst he admitted that the terms "protected and unprotected trade" were wrong terms. It was said that Mr. Young perfectly understood it. Yes, Mr. Young, when he saw the return, did perfectly understand it, and pulled it to pieces. Any one acquainted with the trade of the country, indeed, must have at once seen that this return was fallacious. But it deceived the country for the time, and made food for the *Edinburgh Review* and the free-trade newspapers for months, and the whole country was taken in by this return, which now bears the character of deceit upon its very face. This is the evidence given by Mr. Porter before the House of Lords. [Mr. GIBSON: Read the whole of it.] He justifies the returns by certain questions put to Mr. Young; but he acknowledges that the terms "protected and unprotected trade" are wrong, the distinction drawn not being correct. He admits that China should be struck out of the list of unprotected trade. He admits that Russia should be out of it—that Brazil should be out of it; and then comes a question put to him—if Brazil should be omitted, perhaps the other South American States should be struck out? The answer is, "Well, perhaps, they might." "And Turkey should be omitted?" "Yes, Turkey also." Well, then, if I take out Russia and China, and Brazil, and all the South American States, you will find that the result will be a very different one. The right hon. Gentleman pretends to say that the difference would be still the same; but I utterly deny the fact. I think but for these countries and the steam-vessels engaged in the trade to France and the United Netherlands, the tables would be entirely turned, and, so far from the unprotected trade showing a larger increase where it is exposed to the competition of other countries, the increase upon the exclusively protected trade would prove far beyond that in which there is free competition. Now, is the House so ignorant or so uninformed on this question as to be led away by the statements made of the tonnage and voyages of British steam-vessels, when we find that one of them is set down as having made 145 voyages in one year, figuring as 145 ships? Why not at once take the river steamers — why not take the steamboats from London to Margate and Ramsgate, equally with the steamboats from Dover to Calais? If they took the river steamers and the halfpenny boats, which run each way every quarter of an hour, and if each entry be set down as a new vessel and a new voyage, I will undertake to say that the navigation of the Thames between Richmond and Margate will turn out to be threefold that between England and France, and England and the United Netherlands conjointly. And yet this return is deliberately put upon the table, showing, as it were, a fair criterion by which the public of England are to judge of the effects of free trade and open competition as regards our shipping with other parts of the world. I have here a statement showing what would be the result taking out the countries in which the steamboats are retained and pressed into the service to make up the returns of the unprotected trade, and the result will be found very different indeed. There are two classes—the British West Indies and the British fisheries—which show in Mr. Porter's table on the protected side: these two of all others have the most right to be taken out of the list, and put on the "less protected side;" because, in this interval, between 1824 and 1846, by the emancipation of the slaves, and the consequent total destruction of the business of those colonies, you have, by an Act of Parliament, quite independent of the navigation laws, totally ruined the British shipping trade of the West Indian colonies; while, at the same time, the free-trade admission of the United States into the lumber and provision trade, destroyed the British North American as well as the Irish trade with the West Indian colonies. As to the whale fisheries, they were protected by a bounty—you took that away from them; they were protected also by a high duty on competing foreign oils—spermaceti and vegetable oils — but you reduced these duties, and by the removal of these, without any operation of the navigation laws, you destroyed the whale trade; and now, instead of your 13,000 men employed as heretofore, you are reduced to 2,500—while the Americans have got 20,000 seamen in the whale fishery. This is the result of your recent free-trade legislation. I put then the British West Indies and the fisheries on the other side as being clearly "less protected" now than in 1824. I shall take out Russia, for Mr. Porter admits that it ought to be taken out—I shall take out China, because he admits that it should go; and Turkey also, for the same reason—I shall exclude the steamboat navigation between the United Netherlands and France; and then, on the other side—on the *bonâ fide* "less unprotected" side—there will be found, in addition to the British West Indies and the fisheries, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Prussia, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Gibraltar, Malta, and the United States of America, and I find the result to be, that the real *bonâ fide* protected trade of Great Britain, apart from steamboats, has advanced 145 per cent, while the "less protected trade" has only advanced 93 per cent. There is the difference. And is that no fraud committed upon the country, worked upon and brought into play for the last twelve months? It might be said, that it was a mistake; but, singularly enough, the blunders and errors and mistakes are all on one side.

I have here a return placed upon the table of the House, just about the time the navigation laws were suspended last year, and well calculated to excite the passions of the people. It bears the name of the Secretary of the Treasury, but he is perfectly innocent of it, and declares he knows nothing about it. It goes to show that the country is indebted to the suspension of the navigation law for no less than 63,555 tons of corn, imported in 538 vessels inadmissible under the navigation laws; but it turns out that the 63,000 tons of corn were in reality only 28,000 tons, and the 538 ships were only 304, as shown by the statement I now hold in my hand, namely—

	First false Return.	Corrected Return.
England	201	188
Scotland	102	57
Ireland	235	59
	Ships 538	Ships 304

These are the tricks which continually sway the conduct of the Legislature, and these are the shifts which the free-traders have recourse to. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester said, "that the clamour for the suspension of the navigation laws came from this side of the House." Why, I want to know what it is that hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House do not say? The only remarkable move that was made on this side of the House was—that I moved that the Bill for the further suspension of the navigation laws be read a second time that day six months; that is the only move that was made on this side of the House; and then we are gravely told that the clamour came from this side. Sir, I am greatly rejoiced to hear the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester say, that he condemned all legislation which was carried by clamour. I always thought he had been one of those who had been wafted into power and place upon the turbid waters of agitation and clamour; and I certainly never expected that the right hon. Gentleman who had been obliged to run away from Suffolk, and who had been returned for Manchester by the agitation of the Anti-Corn-Law League, would be the man to condemn clamour and agitation, and all legislation that might arise therefrom.

The learned Member for Bolton (Dr. Bowring) who made a speech upon the navigation laws, and had expressed his opinion that the repeal of them would be for the benefit of the shipowners and mariners and sailors of Great Britain, told us that a little competition did a great deal of good. We used to hear that the free and invigorating air of competition and free trade were for the benefit of, and would encourage these interests; but we have had from the learned Doctor, in the course of this debate, a new phrase, and it is the more valuable as it was said in perfect sobriety and calmness—we are now told by this great apostle of free trade, that it is "the iron hand of competition we must have." It is no longer the free and invigorating air of competition, but things are now called by their right names—the election is now over, the hon. Gentleman has been returned, and we now have the truth told—it is "the iron hand of competition"—the phrase is a happy one—"it is the iron hand of competition" that has doubled the pauperism of the borough which the hon. Gentleman represents, bringing it from 9,000 in 1846, to 17,000 in 1848. It is "the iron hand of competition" which has ruined the British colonies, and dragged down the merchants of England, and the home-manufacturing interests which are dependent on them, and has deprived them of employment. It is "the same iron hand of competition," which we were told by the hon. Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire would reduce the price of flour in the borough of Stockport, "from nine farthings to six farthings the pound." I do not complain much of that statement. He has brought down the price of flour, it appears, at Stockport, to seven farthings; but he has increased the paupers on the parish from 5,500 to 25,000. Yes, he who promised them high wages—he who promised them bread—he who promised them cheap bread, and told them if they could not eat it all, they would have so much more out of the overgrown wealth of the Duke of Buckingham and of the right hon. Gentleman who sits there (Sir J. Graham), to be saved, or expended on sugar, tea, and coffee! How have these promises been fulfilled? He has so ground down wages by "this iron hand of competition," that there are now 25,000 paupers in Stockport, when formerly, previous to free trade, there were only 5,500.

But we had the truth spoken in the Committee upstairs, that has been sitting, as you all know, whose proceedings are reported to the House, and amongst others you will, no doubt, have read the resolution which stands in the name of Mr. Wilson, proposed on the part of Her Majesty's Government. That Committee has, in fact, been what the French call the *Palais de la Verité*. I will do the Committee the justice to say, that never were there men who tried harder to get at the truth, and to frame resolutions upon their different views, according to the evidence; and these are the doctrines of free trade that were propounded by the hon. Member for Westbury, and the people of this country are not so dull but that they will easily be able to ring the changes upon sugar and corn, upon sugar and manufactures, upon sugar and British shipping, freights, and wages; and these are the doctrines laid down, and though rejected by a majority of the Committee, unanimously agreed to by the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, the hon. Member for Dartmouth, the right hon. Member for Manchester, and, I need not say, by the right hon. President of the Board of Trade. The doctrine is, that one of the effects of the protecting duties levied upon foreign sugars has been to promote undue competition for labour in our colonies, and to raise the wages of labour. Of course, that there may be no mistake, the converse of the proposition is put, and the 4th Resolution contains this expression—

> "That the late fall in the price of sugar has already led to a very considerable diminution in the wages of labour; that if the protecting duties were now to be increased, and the price of sugar artificially raised, the efforts to lessen the cost of sugar by a reduction of wages would be impeded, and wages would again be raised in the colonies."

Though truth lends a grace to the natural deformity of the sentiment, we have here the sentiments of the free-traders and political economists laid bare, "that it is protecting duties that raise the price of the produce, and the price of produce creates competition in labour, which raises the wages of labour. Remove the protection, and it leads to diminution of the wages of labour; increase again the protective duties, raise the price of the commodity, and it follows as a matter of course that the wages of labour will rise." Now, let that go forth to the country, and the next time the right hon. Gentleman the late Vice-President of the Board of Trade goes down to Manchester—the next time the hon. Member for the West Riding goes down to his constituents — let each operative take him gently and tenderly by the button-hole, and ask him to explain what difference there is between protection to sugar and protection to corn, protection to the silk manufactures, protection to the woollen manufactures, and protection to the cotton manufactures? And if he can bamboozle the operatives again, the operatives of this country have not half the sense for which I gave them credit. But what said the hon. Member for the West Riding in his letter to the electors of Stockport? He said, "No one could be found so unblushing as to say that cheap corn meant cheap wages." I do remember the time when the right hon. Baronet the Member for Ripon (Sir James Graham) used to say cheap corn meant cheap wages, and he is right. Cheap corn is come, and have you not cheap wages in Stockport and in Bolton? Have you not cheap wages in Bradford — Bradford, which, notwithstanding what the hon. and gallant Colonel (Colonel Thompson) who represents it stated the other evening, of its changing its pantaloons for the silks of France, presents a worse picture than most others in this distressed county? There you have people, their beds and chairs being taken from them, and all their comforts and superfluities at the pawnbroker's, driven by penury and starvation to desperation, and brought into collision with the police force. And how stands the case as regards Manchester? In 1846, there were 27,000 paupers in Manchester, and within the last six months they have increased to 94,000. Is this then the time, above all others, to select for proceeding in this headlong career? Are we to make further progress in free-trade measures at a time when we are experiencing the evil consequences of what we have already done in that direction? Are we to drive the sailors of this country to seek protection in a foreign country, and under a foreign flag? They tell you in their petitions, "the country that protects them, and the flag that flies over them, will become their country and flag, and they will not be likely to come back in the time of war to fight the battles of a country that neglected them in a time of peace." In the same way we shall lose our shipwrights. Is it a time to discourage those classes, when thrones are tottering, when empires are dissolved, when the whole of the continent of Europe is in commotion—is this a time to add a new ingredient to the sufferings which disfigure and disgrace the land? If ever there was a time to stop, it is now; and I counsel the Government not for the sake of these abstract principles, when they do not pretend to show any greater good as likely to arise from them than the cheapening of freights by 2*s.* 6*d.* a ton, to pause before they pursue this headlong course further. For whose good is it? For the good of the foreigner. The free-traders tell you freights will not be so much lower. The free-traders tell you there will be an equalisation of freights; that foreign freights will rise, and British freights fall. But let us profit by the unanimous opinion from the same Committee upstairs I have already quoted. I have read to you the free-trade resolution —the resolution in which the political economists were unanimous; now let me read you a resolution in which the whole Committee was unanimous. This was not the suggestion of any Protectionist, but was ushered in under the patronage of Mr. Moffatt. You will find it stated in the eighth resolution, in which we all unanimously agreed—

> "That a share of the advantages of a higher price in this market by the foreign producer, is a consequence inseparable from the policy of reduced protection."

That I think a great doctrine and a great principle, and it was unanimously concurred in by every Member of a Committee in which there were but three Protectionists besides myself. I think when this broad principle is boldly set forth before the country, "that reduced profits will reduce the wages of labour, and that reduced protection means the transfer of a higher price to the foreigner," the country will certainly open its eyes, and doubt whether it is altogether wise to put another great interest of 40,000,000*l.* sterling into the crucible to see what may come up out of it.

I do not see the hon. and learned Member for Bolton in his place; but the hon. and learned Member said, he thought a closer investigation ought to take place into the conduct of British sailors, masters, and mates. I think the masters and mates might be disposed to retort the compliment upon the hon. and learned Doctor, if they recollected how highly he was paid for his pleasure trip to Germany, and were closely to examine into the value of the fruits of that misssion. I think they would have a right to say, "We ought to examine a little more closely into the conduct and efficiency of our diplomatists before we pay them and send them upon their pleasure enterprises to carry on the affairs of the State." Dr. Bowring was sent in 1840, and before, into different parts of Germany for the purpose of examining and reporting upon the commercial relations of that country with this country. The other night the hon. and learned Gentleman warned us, like the right hon. Member for the University of Oxford, to take the step in time before it was too late; for, he said, "if we did not, Prussia might retaliate." Looking back to the reports made by the hon. and learned Doctor in 1840, I cannot see that Prussia has so much right to complain of our conduct towards her. The learned Doctor then informed us that—

> "The subjects of primary interest in the German States as connected with their English commercial relations, are its corn and timber duties. Their existence is the great impediment to a change in the commercial policy of the Prussian and German States, and their removal or modification will, I am assured, bring about a considerable reduction in the tariffs of the Zollverein, which press most heavily on British produce."

This was a service for which he was paid just as much as a sailor was paid to reef a topsail or heave up the anchor. The learned Doctor, writing to Lord Palmerston, continues:—

> "I am only able to state to your Lordship that I have obtained official assurances, and they will be confirmed by the official reports of Her Majesty's Ministers at Berlin, that the Prussian Government not only consents but desires to enter upon formal negotiations, the object of which will be the mutual and progressive lowering of the tariffs of both countries, with a view to more extended and beneficial commercial intercourse. The friendly disposition of the Prussian authorities I have every reason to believe most cordial and sincere, and that our moving forward in an earnest response to meet such amicable purposes would be most earnestly hailed by the most intelligent functionaries, and by the great body of the German people."

Just let us see what the Governments of Germany think is the degree of free trade to which they are entitled before they make any response. The learned Doctor said—

> "I am bound to confess that it is not expected by the advocates of the Zollverein that Great Britain should admit foreign corn duty free. A moderate tariff on importation with a tendency towards commercial emancipation, would satisfy the most intelligent and influential of those who desire the extension of trading relations with Great Britain. 'It is not to be expected,' (says Osiander,) 'that England, in her advances towards a more liberal commercial system, should by the import of corn leave agriculture unprotected. The most earnest advocates of commercial liberty would hardly expect to accomplish this; for independently of regard for the agricultural interest, the statesman would naturally desire that the import of corn should be made to assist the public revenues. The most enlightened political economists are of opinion that a duty of 6*s.* or 8*s.* per quarter would be an ample security to the British grower, an opinion in which we cordially concur.'"

Evidently misled by the great learning of that great philosopher of whom I have just spoken, the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel), in 1842 and 1846, made one of those earnest moves in advance, and without any reciprocity treaties whatever reduced the duties on timber and corn, in 1842, quite equal to the reduction proposed—namely, 6*s.* or 8*s.* a quarter. What was the result? Germany got all she wanted without giving anything in return. She made no attempt, no step in advance, gave no response, but forthwith raised all her duties; and what was the language held to Prussia by Lord Aberdeen in the year following? Lord Aberdeen, on learning that it was the intention of the Prussian Government to raise the duties on British iron and mousseline de laines, addressed the following letter to Lord Westmoreland:—

> "Foreign Office, June 28, 1842.
>
> "Her Majesty's Government, relying upon the language recently used by the Prussian Government upon the subject of certain additional duties which it was reported were to be imposed by the German League upon manufactures of iron and steel, are unwilling to give credence to the report referred to in these communications. If, however, their expectations should be disappointed, it will be with deep regret that they will learn the intention of Prussia to adopt measures so opposite to the enlightened principles which she has constantly professed. Her Majesty's Government are most unwilling to enter upon a war of tariffs, and have given proof of their desire to extend and improve their commercial intercourse with all nations.
>
> "But if their endeavours in this respect meet with no reciprocity, and only lead to increased restrictions, it may then be absolutely necessary for the British Government to have recourse to retaliatory measures, and even to revise those portions of the new tariff framed in a spirit of liberality which appears to be so little appreciated."

Sir, that was language which became a British Minister bent on taking care of the interests of his country, Did he, in 1843, hold the language of pusillanimity? Did he say if Prussia threatens we must give in for fear of consequences? No, he said if Prussia has deceived us, if the hon. and learned Member for Bolton has misinformed us, if our Commissioner has misled us, we must have recourse to retaliatory measures. That, however, is not the policy now pursued, for the more exacting Prussia became, the more disposed we showed ourselves to surrender. If, however, as my hon. Friend the Member for Whitehaven (Mr. Hildyard) well showed the other night, you can injure Prussian shipping four to one more than she can injure you, if Prussia dares to threaten, and now too that she has invaded territories which by treaty England is bound to defend, is this the time for England to cringe and crouch to her dictates?

Sir, I do not undervalue the power of America. I know her rising greatness; but you have already given her a great share of your colonial trade, for which she has given you nothing in return. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford says, we ought to have bargained for her coasting trade. Why, we cannot keep our intercolonial trade against her; what chance, then, have we against her on her own coasts? Don't imagine that the United States will take away the coasting trade from us, or that we can take hers from her; but, inasmuch as they have got between fourfold and fivefold their due proportion of our colonial trade, if you now repeal the navigation laws, you will deeply injure our shipping interest in their trade with the colonies, and also the interest of our fisheries. We should say to the United States, "Your trade with us and the colonies amounts to 1,400,000 tons, whilst our trade with you is only 800,000 tons; take care what you do by any measures of restriction, for recollect that we take your cotton, your corn, your flour, and your rice free; that if we put a high duty for revenue purposes on your tobacco, we give you a monopoly of the trade. It is no injustice to you, because we forbid tobacco to be grown in this country, and no duty is imposed upon your tobacco that is not placed equally upon that grown in our own colonies. We take all your produce, and yet you do not let in our manufactures, but are now levying a duty of 26 per cent upon them. Allow us free imports before you ask us to give you free trade with our colonies." Then there is the trade with Cuba. At present the carrying trade with Cuba is confined to British ships, and the ships of Cuba and Spain; but if we let the United States into that trade, how will the matter stand? British ships have now virtually a monopoly, for they carried seven-eighths of the sugar from Cuba to this country; but the United States would then get it into their own hands. Recollect that Cuba depends for supplies of provisions and lumber upon the United States, and you have made no treaty with Spain enabling your ships which may bring away sugar from Spain or Porto Rico to carry the lumber and provisions of the United States to the Spanish West Indies. Now, if your ships go to fetch sugar from Cuba, they must go out in ballast, because the colony is supplied with all it requires in the shape of provisions and manufactures by America, and therefore the American vessels would have a double freight, or a freight two ways, whilst British ships would only have a freight for the single voyage; and therefore what chance would there be on the part of England of success in the carrying trade, if she were placed in open competition with the

United States in the trade with Cuba and Porto Rico? None whatever. The rates of freight from those colonies would in such a case be lowered far beyond those from the British West Indies, and thus the competing system would touch us most keenly. Sir, I have heard no argument in the course of this debate concerning the fate and prospects or interests of those 226,000 seamen in the prime of life who represent a population, with their wives and families, nearly equal to those engaged in the cotton trade of this country. I want to know what is to become of them? The right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. M. Gibson) quoted a petition from Manchester, which said—

> "That ships did not make commerce; that manufactures made ships; that the trade of this country is not indebted to her shipping for her manufactures."

Now, Sir, I am not one of those who say that shipping can flourish without manufactures; I think that manufactures and commerce are so closely bound up together that neither can flourish unless the other prospers. But, Sir, I want to know what the Manchester manufacturer would do if we had no ships? How would he get his cotton if there were no ships? If cotton manufactures created shipping, how were America and India discovered? I think, therefore, that those Manchester manufacturers—that those Manchester millowners who signed this petition—have, by asking for the repeal of the navigation laws, greatly overlooked their own interests, and greatly exaggerated their own importance over those engaged in the shipping trade of this country. I think, Sir, that now is the time above all others when we should foster the commercial marine of England. Not because I am one of those who think that the repeal of the navigation laws would for the purposes of to-morrow strip our mercantile navy of all its power and utility in manning the Royal Navy; but because I am of opinion that the effect in a few years would be to diminish that mercantile navy which has always been, and must continue to be, the chief support of the Royal marine.

In giving evidence before the Committee which sat last year, Sir James Stirling said that not more than one-tenth part of the Royal naval force was furnished by the merchant service. No doubt that may be the case in time of peace, but in time of war the fact stands in a different position; and I think the gallant officer was mistaken in the view he took of it. Because, Sir, it seems, by official returns, that of 22,000 seamen entered for the first time in the Royal Navy during the last ten years, from the merchant service, 7,000 had been in the Royal Navy before; but it does not follow that they had not originally learned their business in the mercantile marine, and if it did it would still follow that two-fifths of the Royal Naval force are still in these times of peace provided from the merchant service. Sir James Stirling proposed that we should have a great peace establishment of 40,000 able seamen, exclusive of landsmen and marines, which could be extended by landsmen and marines, in the time of need, to what we had in 1811, a force of 120,000 seamen and 25,000 marines; but I wish to know whether the House is prepared—whether the free-traders, the right hon. Member for the West Riding of York, and his Colleagues, who are for reducing 17,000,000*l.* a year in the military and naval expenditure of the country, are prepared—if the navigation laws were repealed, to increase the naval force of this country to 40,000 able seamen, because, if they are, they must also be prepared to add some 4,000,000*l.* or 5,000,000*l.* to the estimates. Well, then, unless we hear from Her Majesty's Ministers—and none has yet attempted to show how the Navy is to be recruited—it appears to be an act of rashness and insanity at such a moment to weaken the mercantile arm of the country. Not that I am one who fears for this country. I have as much confidence in the vigour, energy, and gallantry of her defenders as any other man can have, and when the struggle comes, I will not, for one, believe that they ever will be found wanting; but if we are not to be found wanting for the struggle, we must be found prepared for the emergency. The great security for peace is great providence for war; and the greatest providence for that, with our insular position and our extended colonies, thousands and thousands of miles apart, is, and ever must be, the strength and attachment of our seamen to their native country; but if "the iron hand of competition" is to be put upon them, and they are to be ground down to cheaper wages—if the $1\frac{1}{2}$lb. of beef and pork is to be exchanged for the $\frac{1}{2}$lb., the rations of Swedes and Norwegians—if they are to have black bread instead of wheaten—if they are to be driven from their homes to seek an asylum in foreign countries—

then, indeed, I shall fear for my country.

"England never did, nor never shall,
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
But when it first did help to wound itself."

But if we discourage and dishearten our seamen — injure them in their pockets, wound them in their feelings, and show them that in time of peace we are indifferent about and careless of them—shall we be able to press them into our service in the day of difficulty and danger? I fear not, Sir; but let us cherish our brave seamen; show them that alike in peace and in war we will provide for them; that we scorn to weigh in the balance with the comforts, the prosperity, and happiness of our gallant defenders the miserable saving of 2*s.* 6*d.* a ton upon our shipping, and the one-eighteenth part of a farthing per pound on our sugar and coffee, and then we may again, as heretofore, boldly challenge and safely defy all the nations of the earth:—

"Come then, ye nations,
Shroud old Ocean with your hostile sails;
By her own sons defended and beloved,
England shall stand unshaken and secure,
And only fall when time itself expires."

Mr. HUME would not follow the noble Lord who had just sat down over the long course of arguments which he had brought before the House; but he was anxious, before this question was decided, to offer a few remarks, and give expression to opinions altogether different from those of the noble Lord. He believed he should be able satisfactorily to show in a few minutes that the object of those who advocated the repeal of the navigation laws was by no means to destroy the Navy or commercial marine of this country, but the reverse. There was no man in that House, not excepting the noble Lord himself, who was more anxious than he was to see that Navy and commercial marine in a state of prosperity; and he would venture to say that, long before the noble Lord raised his voice in favour of our marine, his (Mr. Hume's) opinion stood recorded as to the injustice which the Legislature had inflicted on that department of our commerce. And it was on that ground that he wished to bring back the House to the subject really before it; for the noble Lord had introduced topics altogether foreign to the question then under discussion. He would not enter into a controversy with the noble Lord as to the accuracy of the figures of his hon. Friend the Member for Westbury (Mr. Wilson), or of his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bolton (Dr. Bowring). But he would say this much, that if the noble Lord had made better use of the facts brought forward by those two hon. Gentlemen, he was perfectly satisfied that the noble Lord would not have committed himself in the manner in which he had, as to the reports and opinions to which he had alluded. The noble Lord had dwelt on the conduct of Prussia; but the Prussians had shown their sincerity in favour of a more unrestricted trade with this country ever since 1817. The correspondence between the Prussian Minister and Mr. Canning had been invariably in favour of reducing the restrictions that pressed on the trade between Prussia and this country; but when the Prussian Minister called on Mr. Canning, and said that his Government were willing to enter into an arrangement by which the whole trade between the two countries should be made completely free, or a duty imposed only for purposes of revenue, what was Mr. Canning's answer? He said that, notwithstanding any reductions Prussia might make, England never would consent to repeal her corn laws, as they were inseparably connected with the prosperity and welfare of this country. There the correspondence closed, and Prussia was obliged, in self-defence, to retaliate, until she forced England to yield, and to abandon the restrictions that she had imposed. The noble Lord would find, therefore, that if at that time the landed interests had consented to meet the views of Prussia, and if they had been wise enough to have agreed to a permanent duty of six or eight shillings a quarter on corn, there was scarcely a doubt but that the opponents of the corn laws would hardly, at this time, have effected their repeal. And ought not the noble Lord to take that as a lesson which taught him to alter his course on this question? But it really appeared that all lessons of experience were lost upon those who held the arguments of the noble Lord. They considered that nobody had a right to urge complaints and just demands but England. What right had we to lay down the law exclusively on such questions as these? The noble Lord had talked of the "iron hand of competition." Now, he (Mr. Hume) would ask, what right had we to lay down the iron rule that we should act as we pleased with regard to other countries? We were not in a condition justly to do so. No treaty could exist or ought to exist between us and the European world, or with America, but that which was mutually beneficial and advantageous; and did our experience warrant us in affirming that the rule which we had hitherto laid down could possibly be allowed to continue? He was surprised to hear the noble Lord appeal to the House and to Her Majesty's Ministers, and exclaim, "Don't make this immense change which you are now going to make." Why, they had already, in 1815, made a great change in the navigation laws with regard to America. They had made still further changes in 1820, 1824, and 1826. Why, they had almost repealed half of these navigation laws already. Instead, therefore, of making "a great change," they would, if they adopted the present proposal, only remove a little of the detail, as he might call it, of that obnoxious system, the navigation laws, in order to do away with a great deal of discontent with respect to them, and to give the country the full benefit which it must derive from repeal of those laws. The noble Lord had asked, "Is this the time to make the change which you propose?" His (Mr. Hume's) answer was, "It is the time." The noble Lord had endeavoured to impress upon the House and the country that the free-trade measures which had been already passed, had produced the distress that had recently happened in this country. But he (Mr. Hume) could point out to the noble Lord periods when the distress in this country was much greater than at present, notwithstanding we had, in the same periods the corn laws, and other monopolies, in full force. In 1816 those laws existed untouched, and yet there prevailed in that very year greater distress than he had ever seen, either before or since; and the noble Lord might as well (and he believed with more reason) attribute the distress which prevailed at that time to those laws, as the present distress to the operation of the late free-trade measures. The truth was, the late free-trade measures had not yet had time to operate. We had not free trade yet carried out to the full extent which he desired. We had a great many impediments yet to remove; but he believed that the removal of commercial restrictions effected by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth had placed this country in a situation to prevent a recurrence of the calamities of 1816; and he believed that the distress at present existing would have been much aggravated if those restrictions had not been abolished. It was on these grounds, therefore, that he (Mr. Hume) advocated the entire repeal of those laws which had hitherto impeded exchanges between this and other countries. The noble Lord spoke as if he were the only true advocate of the commercial interests of this country. Why, could any man convince him that the effect of putting impediments in the way of exchange between country and country, was not to diminish commercial transactions? Would the noble Lord undertake to prove that the impediments which the Legislature placed upon those exchanges, were not, in fact, in the language of his right hon. Friend the late Vice-President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Gibson), direct injuries upon the community at large? Such impediments operated as checks upon commerce; they prevented employment, and diminished the general prosperity of the country. Was it then really fair for the noble Lord and those who adopted his arguments to attribute the present distress to the late measure of free trade? The noble Lord had appealed to the free-traders, and said, "Will you destroy this, and will you destroy that; will you destroy the commercial marine?" His answer was, "No, we will not destroy it; we will increase it." And that such would be the effect of the repeal of the navigation laws he was perfectly convinced. Nothing appeared more evident to him than this, that, if the navigation laws had not existed, our commerce and commercial marine would have been much greater than they now were. He was confident that those laws had impeded their increase. He would not then enter into a contest with the noble Lord with regard to figures, on which the noble Lord differed from his right hon. Friend (Mr. Gibson) and Mr. Porter; but he would venture to say that the charges of falsity against Mr. Porter's figures were altogether groundless. He paid attention to them whilst serving on the Navigation Laws Committee, and he had looked into them on subsequent occasions. He told Mr. Porter that insinuations had been made in certain quarters that those figures had been got up improperly under the direction of the President of the Board of Trade; and he (Mr. Hume) wished to ascertain whether such was the fact. Mr. Porter replied that the charges were altogether without foundation. He believed that Mr. Porter's figures and the Committee's report were perfectly correct. He would as soon trust Mr. Porter's statements as any man's in the Government service. The noble Lord, then, was not acting fairly when he based his arguments on the assumption that all these statements and reports were mere fictions, got up for the purpose of serving the views of the Government. He did not, therefore, see anything in the argument which he had made upon his mistaken supposition. The noble Lord had asked for what purpose it was that they were now about to make this proposed change? Why, it was that they might be consistent with the free-trade principles which they had already adopted on other questions; it was that they might strike off the fetters that bound down our commerce with the whole world. Free trade could not exist where navigation laws existed. It was really a matter of duty, consistency, and principle, that they should abolish those laws which impeded and checked the growth of that commerce which they all seemed anxious to promote. Now, with regard to their fisheries, which the noble Lord had dwelt so forcibly upon, what were the facts? The noble Lord had said that there were at one time 700 British ships belonging the South Sea fishery. [Lord G. BENTINCK: I stated the number to have been at one time 726.] Did the noble Lord know that in 1834, his Friend Mr. George Frederick Young, who had been then a Member of that House, and who had so prominently come forward with evidence on this question, gave a different account of the matter? did the noble Lord know what were Mr. Young's views as to the decline of the South Sea trade? Would the noble Lord take Mr. Young's testimony of the causes which then existed, tending to the depression of that trade? Mr. Young, in moving on the 5th of June, 1834, for leave to bring in a Bill to repeal the Reciprocity of Duties Act, entered into a statement of the grievances of which the British shipowner had to complain. Mr. Young, who was well acquainted with shipbuilding, said, on that occasion, that in consequence of the heavy duties which were paid on every article used in the construction of a ship in Great Britain, none of which attached to those articles in other nations, it was impossible for the British shipholder, unprotected, to compete with the foreigner. There was no one in that House more anxious than he was to remove the burdens on the shipping interests which still remained; but he thought that they had a right to complain of those who now put themselves forward as the friends of the British shipowner for the course that they had taken on former occasions. When Lord Althorp, in 1833, brought in a Bill for removing the duty on timber used in shipbuilding, the noble Lord and his party actually rejected the Motion, and compelled the Ministry of the day to give up a measure which he believed would have been attended with the most beneficial results to the shipping interests of this country. And yet that very party had now the effrontery to say that the advocates of free trade sought to injure the mercantile marine, whereas they had themselves sacrificed that interest, and injured the prosperity of the country to an enormous extent. But did he rest his view on that ground alone? He recollected having heard Mr. Young state, on the occasion to which he before alluded, that foreign ships could victual from 40 to 50 per cent less than British ships, amounting to from 9 to 15 per cent on the expense of the whole voyage. Mr. Young called upon them either to repeal the Navigation Acts and the Registry Acts, and to leave them to build and navigate their ships as cheaply as they could, or else to give them a protection equal to the disqualification imposed upon them. He agreed fully in all that Mr. Young had said about the burdens on shipowners, but he differed from that gentleman as to the remedy to be employed. Mr. Young was for repealing the Act under which the reciprocity treaties had been entered into; but he (Mr. Hume) could not agree in such a view of the subject. For his part, it was a matter of surprise to him how their commercial marine had been so long able to bear up against the injuries imposed by the navigation laws, and the restrictions of which the shipping interests so justly complained. Of the various grievances which Mr. Young had quoted in 1834, the principal that still remained was that relating to the manning of ships; but even in that respect it should be recollected that the men were paid higher wages in America than in this country, and that, as far the United States were concerned, England had the advantage in this particular. As to the building of ships, they had it in evidence before the Committee that the Swedes and Norwegians were obliged to come over to England for numerous articles used in the construction of vessels. And as the duty was now taken off hemp, iron, tar, copper, ropes, sails, anchors, and other articles, which had to pay duty at the time that Mr. Young had made his statement in 1834, there could be no doubt but that the British shipbuilder would be able to compete with the shipbuilder of any part of the world. He would say, let English shipowners and English capital have the advantage of the material wherewith to work; and was there a man who heard him who could say that ships could be made up cheaper in any part of the world than in this country? The ten grievances stated by the shipowners in 1834, were directed against the Reciprocity Acts; but since that period, all the complaints then made had been removed. He wished to know, therefore, what it was they now wanted? As he gathered from the speeches of their organs in that House, they wanted a monopoly of trade: they wished to prevent foreign ships coming into competition with theirs. This was impossible under a system of free trade. Already had it been determined that foreign manufactures should be brought into competition with our own; and upon what principle of reason or justice could the House refuse now to cheapen freights? The rate of carriage was of more importance to English manufacturers than to the subjects of any other country in the world, because we imported the greatest quantity of raw materials. He would put it to hon. Gentlemen opposite, who contended for the maintenance of the existing system, whether it was not of great importance to have the price of raw materials for manufactures cheapened? There could be no doubt about it; and it was on this ground he contended that the shipowners, who insisted upon retaining the navigation laws instead of seeking to promote the welfare of the country, were seeking to impoverish it for their own profit. He firmly believed that if these laws had been removed in the year 1815, there would have been a progressive increase in our shipping to a much greater amount than had taken place, and that its owners would have been far more prosperous than they were; and he likewise firmly believed that a better time could not have been chosen than the present for adopting this policy as part of the great system of free trade. Various objections, however, were urged, none of which had, in his mind, the least soundness. Amongst them it was alleged that Sir James Stirling had given his evidence hastily. He denied that allegation. He believed Sir James Stirling's opinions were based upon mature reflection—that they would be found correct, and impossible to be shaken. Was it not a fact that so far from the navigation laws tending to increase the number of seamen for the Navy, they had actually rendered them more scarce? Was it not also a fact that the apprenticeship system had thrown men from our shores just at the moment when they were of most value? Then with regard to the loss of the South Sea fisheries, the facility with which the Americans had obtained that trade had arisen partly from the distance and partly from the operation of our own legislation; but there was every reason to believe, that if these laws were repealed, our Australian Colonies would very soon take from the United States a large portion of that trade. So far as the experiments had yet been made, they had been successful. On these grounds he called upon those hon. Gentlemen who asked for the maintenance of the navigation laws, to act upon their own principles, as enunciated in 1834. Let them join with his (Mr. Hume's) side of the House, in urging their repeal, and in pressing upon the Government the necessity of removing every burden upon British ships to which foreign vessels were not liable.

ADMIRAL BOWLES: It is always with reluctance that I take up the time of the House; but I trust I may ask for their indulgence on the present occasion, which is of too much importance to justify an officer of my rank in contenting himself with a merely silent vote: and differing, as I do, from Her Majesty's Government, it is my duty to state my opinion to them honestly and fairly. I believe, Sir, I shall best consult the wishes and convenience of the House by confining my observations to the naval part of the question, avoiding as far as may be possible a repetition of the arguments which have been already urged during this protracted debate, and addressing myself to the main question, namely, the effect which the proposed changes will have on our maritime superiority, and on the supply of seamen for the Royal Navy during war, or on any sudden emergency when this calamity may be averted by a rapid display of force. But, Sir, it is impossible to do this without pausing for a moment to ask the reason why measures of this extreme importance are thus urgently pressed forward at so late a period of the Session, and when an inquiry, left unfinished last year by this branch of the Legislature, is now in progress in the other House of Parliament. If Her Majesty's Ministers have no intention of doing more than to place their plan before the country for consideration during the remainder of the year, my objection to going into Committee would be very materially diminished. I am fully aware that many improvements and modifications of our present system have become necessary, and more especially with respect to our colonies; but what I most dread is, any rash and hasty legislation at so critical a period; for most critical I cannot but consider it, notwithstanding the observations of the right hon. Member for Oxford University, when the whole world is convulsed around us, and we know so little what another month may bring forth; and I consider those as incurring a most fearful responsibility who add, at such a moment, to the distress and dissatisfaction already too prevalent, and give an additional shock to public confidence by alarming great and important interests. Let me, Sir, recall to the recollection of the House the fatal consequences of a similar course taken by Her Majesty's Government not two years since. Anxious, apparently, to outstrip their predecessors in the race of liberality, they rashly brought forward those measures which have proved so destructive to our West Indian colonies, and of which the results are so well described in the report of the Committee recently laid on the table. All our sacrifices in the cause of humanity have been rendered abortive, and the negro population, which we had hoped to christianise and civilise, are in imminent danger of relapsing into heathenism and barbarism, by the withdrawal of all the means of education and religious instruction. And yet, Sir, what sanguine predictions were hazarded in 1846 with respect to these measures! Let me read two very short extracts from speeches of that period, and then ask the House to pause before they again rely on oracles so signally deceptive. Lord J. Russell said—

> "Impelled by energy, and invigorated by the spirit of freedom in commercial transactions, my belief is that the colonists will gain and not suffer by this great change in our policy. I believe that the cultivation of sugar will be itself advanced to a greater extent when the colonists know that they must compete in the market of the mother country with the productions of other nations."

Sir C. Wood said—

> "I believe they will ultimately triumph in the great experiment which we are about to try. With all that skill, energy, and power, which belong to the merchants and planters of those colonies, it will be a measure of benefit, and not of injury. To all others—the merchants and manufacturers of this country—I entertain sanguine hopes it will be most beneficial, and more especially to the shipowners, to whom it will be most advantageous."

But, Sir, I will, as I promised, avoid enlarging further on this part of the question, and confine my remaining observations to the probable effects of these changes on our national Navy; and here I cannot hesitate to declare my own decided opinion that the two marines are inseparably and indissolubly united—that they must stand and fall together—and that any measure which may impair or injure the one, will equally affect the other. Where can fifty or sixty thousand seamen be found to fit out and fight our fleets except in our mercantile marine? Even during peace a perpetual interchange of men is going on between the two services, to their mutual advantage; and, notwithstanding my regard and respect for Sir J. Stirling, I cannot but say, after the appeals that have been made to his opinions and authority, that scarcely a second officer in the Navy could have been found to corroborate them; and when it is considered that, after all, his only plan for rendering the Navy independent of the merchant service is, to keep up something very like a war establishment during peace, I should like to hear what the Chancellor of the Exchequer says before I offer any further remarks. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford considers, on the contrary, the abundance of seamen in the merchant service to be so great that a sufficient supply may always be obtained, and refers to 1793 in support of his assertion; but he should recollect that at that time nobody dreamed of calling in question the propriety or necessity of impressment, and that 50,000 men were in those (perhaps more barbarous, but certainly more vigorous) days, easily raised—but now let the House consider the outcry that has been raised, and the endeavours made to excite irritation and resistance against it, and reflect whether we can safely depend on procuring men by the same means with the same rapidity. I therefore earnestly entreat once more of the House, to pause before they enter on a course which may lead to a serious diminution of that reserve force on which the safety of the country must always depend. I perceive that the destruction of the apprentice system is also contemplated. Surely, Sir, when it is considered that this is a school in which from 20,000 to 30,000 boys are annually training, to supply the void which the casualties inseparable from a sailor's life are daily creating amongst our seamen, it would be more prudent rather to modify than to destroy so valuable a part of our system, if we really have any reason to apprehend that our supply of seamen exceeds the demand for them. I was yesterday at the Marine Society's office—an institution which annually takes about 1,200 boys out of the streets of London, and renders them valuable members of society. This charity will be rendered useless if the apprentice system is abolished. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester may ridicule my apprehensions, and impute them to age and professional prejudices. He, we know, thinks that the golden age has already arrived—that the lion and lamb are lying down together—that wars and rumours of wars have ceased for ever—and that the "spirit of the times" demands the sacrifice of our Navy and maritime superiority before that golden image of Mammon, which he would fain persuade us is the only object of adoration amongst his constituents at Manchester. But I am persuaded, Sir, that he greatly misrepresents them; that they are fully aware of the importance of protection and defence to their widely (and often hazardously) extended commercial interests; that they will estimate as it deserves all this wild declamation, and have sufficient intelligence to appreciate the value of a reserve of 230,000 British seamen to strengthen the Royal Navy in time of need. That Navy, Sir, has only very lately recovered, under the wise and vigorous administration of the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel), from the effects of ten years' ill-judged and overstrained economy. I trust it will not be subjected to any new experiments; and that the warning voice of an old officer, who has witnessed its most glorious days, and trusts he may never live to see those glories dimmed or obscured, may not be raised in vain.

Mr. COBDEN: The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn has travelled through a wide field of topics; but I do not feel it incumbent on me to follow his example. The noble Lord and I start from totally opposite premises. He is for protection to all, or, in other words, he wishes to tax all for the benefit of all; I wish to tax none for the benefit of any. We therefore proceed from two opposite principles to the discussion of the question before the House. It is hardly fair in the noble Lord to say that dissatisfaction exists as to the consequences of free-trade measures. I believe that the country is satisfied with those measures. I do not mean to say that the country is satisfied with the present state of commerce and manufactures; but whatever hallucination may prevail on that subject in this House, I believe that the country generally attributes the present suffering to causes totally distinct from those to which the noble Lord always refers it. There is one point to which I wish to call the noble Lord's attention, because I think that he will, with his usual candour, admit that it presents a difficulty in the way of the establishment of his premises. The noble Lord wishes for protection for everybody; but we annually export 50,000,000*l.* worth of manufactures, the producers of which have no protection whatever. I found that this circumstance supplied me with a powerful argument when I was advocating the repeal of the corn laws. The exporters of those 50,000,000*l.* worth of manufactures and produce sustained their share of public burdens, they gave employment to millions of the population, and yet they enjoyed no protection. Since the alteration of the corn laws the free-traders have enlisted on their side the agriculturists as well as the manufacturers, and now we purpose to take another step in free trade. It remains for the opponents of the repeal of the navigation laws to show what special ground exists for continuing a tax on the carrying of commodities for the interest of shipowners. That is the whole question before us to-night. Strong as I found myself in advocating free trade in corn, I find myself infinitely stronger in advocating free trade in shipping; because nearly all the arguments on which a free trade in corn was opposed, have vanished when we come to consider the question of free trade in shipping. When we asked for the repeal of the corn laws, we were told of the exclusive burdens which pressed upon the agricultural population, and of the heavy taxes upon their consumable articles. Those arguments cannot be applied to the shipping question. Why should not the sailor in his ship, as well as the workman in the factory, or the labourer on the farm, be able to compete with foreigners? You have applied free trade to the manufacturer and the agricultural labourer; why not apply it to the sailor? He has infinitely the advantage over both. When a sailor gets into work and goes abroad in his ship, he pays no duty on his sugar, or his tea, or his spirits, or his wine—he gets all these duty free. And what also is the position of your shipowner? I used to hear a great outcry by hon. Gentlemen opposite when they talked of the great burdens that were thrown upon the landowner—the county rates, the highway rates, the poor-rates, the church rates—but the shipowner pays none of these; he is exempted from all such burdens. Therefore, on the score of taxation, the shipowner and the sailor are infinitely better able to compete with the foreigner than any other class of the community. What is the principle of free trade? You will admit that if it means anything it is the bringing of more commodities into this country than would be otherwise imported, and that is what you dread, although it is obvious that it must be advantageous to the shipowner. Now take the shipbuilder, the shipowner, the sailor; take the whole community of consumers—for we are all consumers—and let us see what is the effect of this principle. Take the shipbuilder, to begin with; you say he cannot compete with the foreigner. Why cannot he compete with the foreigner? It has been proved over and over again that you have built ships here—taking the whole ship equipments into account—cheaper than in any other part of the world, quality for quality. I am not going to take a Canadian-built ship, which may have stood on Lloyd's books for four years, and compare it with a British-built ship. Hon. Gentlemen engaged in agriculture have run away with an idea that a ship is built entirely with wood like a box. Why, the wood is not the half of the cost of a ship; though the British shipbuilder has an advantage even with regard to the timber, without taking into account the superiority of the workmen. But I take the ship altogether. You have one fact mentioned in the evidence before the Committee by a witness who stated that he built a ship in Sunderland cheaper than at Dantzic. I took the blue book with me to Dantzic, where great interest was taken in this question, and I asked whether the statement was correct? I said, can you build a ship at Sunderland cheaper than you can at Dantzic? and the answer I got was confirmatory of the evidence given in the blue book. We hear much of the high wages paid to shipwrights in this country—it is true their wages are higher than in many countries, but they do more work. But we all know that our greatest rivals, the Americans, pay far higher wages to their shipwrights than we do; and why? Because the American shipwrights are better educated; they are harder working men than ours are in England—work a greater number of hours, and take shorter time for dinner. They work more intently and with more diligence in America than in England; they therefore get higher wages, but that is not paying more money for the work done. Then we come to the shipowner; now, if he can buy his ship here as cheap as anywhere else, why should he not compete with the foreigner in the sailing of his ship? Here, at the threshold, is one difficulty, which ought to be fairly met. In comparison with American ships, our ships are not so well worked; the crews are not so quick; the captains do not so readily despatch business in port, nor do they take the same care of the cargo. But that is a great difficulty which may be got over, and does not affect the inherent qualities of our sailors. We have heard a good deal about the reports of our consuls abroad in regard to the conduct of our sailors. I will not say anything upon my own authority in depreciation of the character of our sailors; but it is mentioned in the evidence of Mr. Young and Mr. Somes that our sailors are very insubordinate and disorderly in their conduct in port. The hon. Member for Oxfordshire has said a great deal respecting Mr. Booker, our consul at Cronstadt. It is perfectly true he has been fifty-nine years a consul, and is a highly interesting man of his age. I visited him. I entered his office on the 25th of September last. I found him engaged; he came to me and said he had been engaged on some very disagreeable business in settling a dispute between some sailors, and that that was the third case he had had to deal with to-day. We had a little more conversation on the subject, and he told me the last July he had sixty-one squabbles between sailors of that port and their officers to settle in his counting-house. He then said that there had been issued a circular, addressed to the masters of ships, dated July 11, 1847, which was to the following effect:—

> "That in consequence of the serious and unbecoming riots which had broken out last Sunday in more places than one, the masters of ships were desired to warn their men to conduct themselves with more propriety, and to caution them not to resist the soldiers or police."

It was also suggested that, if possible, the sailors should be paid their money on the week days, in order to prevent their coming on shore on a Sunday, thereby causing a great desecration of the Lord's day. From what I heard from Mr. Booker, it corroborated the allegations contained in the circular. He did not tell me that the sailors committed robbery, and it may be perfectly true that during the fifty-nine years of his experience there might have been only two British sailors sent to St. Petersburgh to be tried for such an offence. But that is not the question: the question is whether the English sailors in port were given to habits of intoxication. I believe there is too much of it. Is it wise that we should shut our eyes to that fact, and lavish praises upon British seamen, rather than tell them plainly what are the complaints that are made against them? I believe that the English sailor is a much less sober character than the Mediterranean or the Adriatic sailor. I believe that he is much less educated than the sailors from the northern countries, and certainly less educated and sober than the sailors in the American service. These are very serious disadvantages in navigating a vessel, and it is highly desirable that these evils should be corrected. You could not do better service to the country than to tell the British seamen of these faults. I never heard but one opinion expressed in every part of the world where I have been, that the English sailor has natural qualities superior to those of the sailors of all other nations. None could go aloft better in a gale of wind; none in the greatest danger could show such calmness, courage, and energy, as he. These are his natural qualities, which will always belong to him, in spite of all moral disadvantages. But let us try and educate him morally, in addition to his physical superiority, and so improve the man as to render him less vulnerable to competition than he now is. If then we are agreed that we can build ships cheaper here than abroad, and if our sailors are naturally of as good quality as any in the world, then I ask why we should not be able to compete with foreigners, as it is called, on the sea? I see no danger to our mercantile marine excepting in the system which calls itself, and falsely calls itself, a system of protection. The effect of that system is to make both the men and the captains trust to some peculiar privilege and protection from the English flag; and induce them to look to your legislation for assistance rather than rely on their own energies and exertions. I maintain, that if you repeal the navigation laws, you will do more to bring out those natural qualities of the British seamen than by any other means you can pursue. But the question, after all, is this, whether you are to put any impediment in the way of our receipt of commodities from foreign countries, with a view to benefit this or that interest? Our old question about protection was in respect to the revenue. It was said, that protecting duties were required for the sake of the revenue; but the navigation law never was a question of revenue—it is a pure prohibition of the right of freely carrying commodities. I contend, that both the manufacturers and the agriculturists of this country have in fairness a right to get their raw produce as cheap as it can be brought from any place on the earth. The agriculturists will have free trade in corn on the 1st of February next year; but what is now their case? Some time since a Swedish ship, coming from America with a cargo of bones, arrived at Yarmouth; but, as the law stood, the captain was not allowed to land the cargo, because they were not brought from Sweden, or in an American vessel. "No," say the farmer's friends, "you shall not have these bones to manure your farms in Norfolk." The captain then goes to Hamburgh, lands the bones there; they are then laid on a Holstein farm; a crop is grown upon that farm: and that crop comes here next summer duty free, in competition with the Norfolk farmer. Apply this to guano, oil cake, clover seed, and what is it that the farmer's friends are in effect doing? Cannot they see that, having applied the principle of free trade to the article of corn, they cannot do a greater injustice to the farmer than by putting an obstacle in the way of his receiving every other article as cheap as he can get them? I was rather amused that the noble Lord opposite should make an attack on the Statistical Board; for, if there is any one department of Government which has the confidence of the country and the world, it is the statistical department against which the noble Lord has levelled his attack. But my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester has sufficiently vindicated Mr. Porter and the Board from the aspersions which have been cast upon it. It is a fact clearly established by statistical returns that our tonnage has been increasing in a greater ratio than that of any other country. But I do not put my argument on that ground; for if I could not support that argument, still I should advocate free trade in shipping; for if there be anything we cannot do cheaper than other countries, then I am for buying an article from any other country which can produce it cheaper than we; and if that article be the freight of shipping, I will then take that shipping in preference to our own. But don't let me be misunderstood. We have especial advantages in shipping over all the world, for however good our manufacturers may be, or our farmers may be, there can be no doubt that from our peculiar insular position we are of necessity a maritime people. It is the inherent nature of the British race—it is our passion. As the camel is to the men of the desert, or as the horse is to the Tartar, so are ships to the English people. We could not live without ships—we should be barbarians if we were not sailors. With regard to the coasting trade, I am sorry that the Government has not thrown it open altogether. I do not believe any foreigners would come on our shore. The language itself would be an obstacle, besides the many local interests that would make competition impossible. I also regret that the power of retaliation should be given to the Queen in Council, not that I believe it will be ever acted upon. I will say one word only on the naval view of the question. I have heard with regret much of that which we are apt to stigmatise as the doctrine of physical force when used by our poorer fellow-countrymen. I dislike these incessant boasts of our maritime supremacy and maritime greatness. But, believing that a change in our navigation laws is not destined to weaken the force of our mercantile marine, so neither can I suppose that it will diminish our naval supremacy. But what I object to is, that you should be constantly harping upon the string. Is this the time to be always singing "Rule, Britannia?" [*Laughter.*] If hon. Gentlemen who laugh were on the Army, Navy, and Ordnance Committee with me, they would have a more just sense of the cost of that tune. My hon. Friend the Member for Manchester has been a good deal attacked for the pacific sentiments he uttered at the conclusion of his able speech the other night. I beg to express unfeignedly my sympathy in his sentiments; but I must observe that he did not say what has been attributed to him—that we were going to enter upon the millennium of universal peace. What he said was, that you should not treat war as the normal state of this country, for that the country is in favour of peace. He said that this is an age in which peaceful principles prevail, and in that sentiment I most fully corroborate him. If you doubt it, let only a word be expressed in this House which indicates that you are going to war, and then you will feel the full force of public opinion in favour of peace. The ground on which I object to this constant assumption of warlike supremacy is, that it provokes kindred passions on the part of other nations; and the conviction of my hon. Friend near me, and my own conviction, is, that if we enunciate the doctrines of peace, we shall draw forth similar sentiments from the rest of the world. Whilst we are as much interested as any Members of this House can be in the maintenance of every just right of the English people, we are anxious to identify ourselves with the principles of peace, and to identify the question of free trade, and especially that of the repeal of the navigation laws, with those principles, believing, as we do, that by removing the obstacles to free communication between nations by shipping, we are doing more to blend and interweave nations one with another that can be done by any other process. If you adopt the principle of free trade in navigation, should war at any future time arise, you render it almost impossible for the system of maritime warfare—especially by privateers—to be carried on; for when ships under all flags are carrying the commodities of all nations, you will defy armed cruisers to find the commodities of which they are in quest, and you will put a strong obstacle in the way of war by removing one of the greatest inducements which has hitherto led mankind to engage in war.

Mr. DISRAELI: I remember that the noble Lord opposite used sometimes to tell us when we attempted to defend that cause of protection which we have not yet deserted, that we were reasoning in a vicious circle. The noble Lord was apt to say, "True it is that the interests you are now advocating may probably profit by the injury of another interest; that other interest may also, in its turn, by some exceptional legislation, profit at the cost of its neighbour; but you are, in fact, moving," as the noble Lord well expressed it, "in a vicious circle. Interest after interest receives an exceptional advantage, but the result is, when you go round the circle, that the multitude are injured." We have now, Sir, a new vicious circle introduced into our debates. A new interest is attacked in this debate; and it is said with an air of calmness by those who have come forward to develop this new philosophy, "It is very true the present proposal may inflict a great injury upon this interest; but because other interests have been injured, the vicious circle must be completed, and we can only go round. Here is one more interest left; we may even find another; but after having deprived so many interests of their advantages—after having pursued a course of theoretic legislation that has terminated in so much practical misery, it is only in accordance with every principle of reason, of justice, and of that candour and fairness so characteristic of Britons, that we should deal out to every other interest the same merciful interposition that has produced such beneficent results." The first vicious circle was a sufficiently disagreeable circumstance in the history of this country. What men think of the second vicious circle I leave with confidence to that irritated public opinion which, I believe, will not long hesitate in expressing its convictions upon the subject. The hon. Gentleman who has just addressed us is the principal author of the first vicious circle. Had it not been for him that thesis would never have been adopted by a Minister and accepted by a Parliament; and now, after a lapse of two years, the hon. Gentleman has to rise in his place in this House and to become the advocate of the new vicious circle. Before, he promised us general advantage; now, he says it is only just that you should all take your share in the universal disaster. With regard, Sir, to the unfortunate interest which is now before us, which is now laid upon the dissection table of that Assembly which was called together to watch over the interests and guard the rights of Englishmen—with regard to the new victim, this I will say, that if the question before us were an inquiry into the comparative expense of building a ship at Stettin or at Sunderland, I should consider it, as far as I am concerned, an act of the utmost presumption to offer my opinion upon the subject. I have listened with, I believe, constant attention, to the course of this debate; I am sure that I have studied, with as much power of abstraction as I could command, the evidence that has been submitted to the two Houses of Parliament; but to presume to rise and offer my opinion to this House as to the relative price of cordage or of sailcloth, would be an act of arrogance of which I trust I never should be guilty. I confess at once that I am inextricably involved in the coils of such a controversy. The pitch and tar of the details of such an argument conceal and discolour all the great principles that are really at stake. I leave the power of adjudication upon such a topic to the hon. Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire. I should have thought, myself, that this House was not exactly the tribunal competent to decide upon such a topic in a satisfactory manner. But the hon. Member for the West Riding has immense advantage. He is a friend of Mr. Brunton, who has told him that he has had personal experience of the cost of building ships, both at Sunderland and at Stettin; and that some years ago, when he communicated with the hon. Gentleman, he had no fear of the competition of the ports of the Baltic. I bow with great respect to the opinion of Mr. Brunton; but as his views have been referred to, I may state that I have in my hand a paper containing a much more recent opinion of that gentleman than the one quoted by the hon. Member for the West Riding. This is a paper which was sent to me in common, I dare say, with many other hon. Gentlemen; and I find from that, at a meeting on the subject of the navigation laws held at the Exchange in Sunderland, a few days ago, Mr. Brunton was the principal orator, and moved a resolution. It seems that a Mr. Wilson—not the hon. Member for Westbury—who gave evidence before the Committee of this House, expressed his opinion at that meeting upon this important subject; and Mr. Brunton, in alluding to that gentleman's speech, said that he did not mean to charge Mr. Wilson with telling a falsehood, but that he would adopt a milder term. [The hon. Gentleman read an account of the meeting, which stated, that Mr. Wilson having said that the repeal of the navigation laws would make little difference to British shipowners, Mr. Brunton observed, that he considered such a measure would depreciate their property 30 or 40 per cent; that it would drive the purchaser of ships to foreign countries; and that all artisans concerned in the shipbuilding trade must suffer very severely.] Mr. Brunton sat down amid loud cheers, after proposing a resolution expressing the opinion of the meeting that if this measure of the Government is carried, it will be fatal to British shipbuilders and to British shipowners, and calling upon those who are favourable to the interests of native industry to rally round the British shipbuilders and shipowners at this moment. Now, I beg the House to observe, that it was not I who introduced the name of Mr. Brunton into this debate, nor should I have done so; but when I found so great an authority brought before our notice by the hon. Member for the West Riding—when I saw that Mr. Brunton was evidently the authority upon which the hon. Gentleman had formed his opinions—I think the House will agree with me that it was my duty to give them the last opinion of Mr. Brunton upon this very same subject. Before I enter into the general question, I cannot but notice some observations of the hon. Member for the West Riding respecting our commercial marine. Anything that falls from that hon. Gentleman always commands considerable attention from the public; and after the journey which the hon. Gentleman made through Europe in a moment of almost unparalleled triumph, anything he may say in this House will probably be re-echoed, even at this period of distraction, throughout the Continent, and will no doubt influence public opinion. I listened with great regret to what that hon. Gentleman said with respect to British mariners and to British captains. We all know that the British seaman, or any Englishman under any circumstances, is not like the drilled slave of countries where the population have not been educated under the influence of institutions similar to our own. There is no doubt that in any establishment, and among any body of men, you will always find very troublesome fellows to deal with; but that is not any evidence against the character of the race, as the hon. Gentleman calls it, or against the system under which they are educated and employed. It is rather an evidence of the consequence of free institutions and of those liberal principles which the hon. Gentleman admires. Now, I have some evidence before me of the conduct of Englishmen, not in a ship, but in an establishment scarcely inferior to it in national importance. The person by whom the statement is made is Mr. John Brooks, a gentleman well known to the Select Committee on the Navigation Laws, and to hon. Gentlemen opposite. He was asked by Mr. Alderman Thompson—

"If the navigation laws were repealed, of course you would repeal that part of them which prohibits English ships from navigating with less than three-fourths of English seamen?"

Mr. Brooks replied—

"I do not much understand that question; but my belief is, that there is a fourth of foreigners allowed to come in an English vessel; but the English ships do not keep up that fourth, for this reason, that the sailors cannot agree: I have had a good deal to do with the management of my men in Lancashire."

(That was in his mill)—

"I have fought several battles with my men. There are men there called 'Flints' and 'Knobsticks.' I have had sixty soldiers and three officers for nine months at my works, and I understand therefore a good deal about that, and when they are mixed together they do not agree."

Now, suppose I were to come forward with that evidence and say, "You see the state of the working population in the most favoured districts of the country; some are called flints and some knobsticks; the British Parliament must immediately interfere, for you see that one of the most eminent of our manufacturers is obliged to have sixty soldiers and three officers on his premises for nine months, in order to keep them in order." If I were to draw that deduction, as any man might, from these circumstances, would it not be an entirely false deduction? And is it to be tolerated, when there is such evidence given before a Parliamentary Committee, and a Committee, too, on the navigation laws, that a manufacturer should rise in this House and deduce from other evidence given before the same Committee, that the conduct of our mariners is disgraceful to the country; that they are an ill-disciplined, unruly, disorderly crew; when there is just as much evidence on which to build a theory equally well-founded with respect to the factory workers? I will not notice any observations of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire of a minute nature, because I wish not to trespass too long on the time of the House, and am desirous to advance at once to the real merits of the case. I must, however, make a single comment on one observation of the hon. Gentleman, not certainly of great importance, but it is right that the truth should be accurately known; and when an erroneous impression is produced in this House by a master of rhetoric, as the hon. Gentleman certainly is, it is useful to correct it. The hon.

Gentleman said, with respect to the coasting trade—"Who wants protection? The native tongue of England is a protection—we need have no fear of foreigners—our language is a protection." Now, the hon. Gentleman, I dare say, is not aware of a circumstance which, I assure him, I now state accurately to him, namely, that no man is allowed to be a captain in the marine of Sweden or Norway who is not master of the English language. I admit that this is not a point of great importance, and should not have adverted to it but for the argument of the hon. Gentleman, yet I think it is a fair answer to the conclusion built on the circumstances stated by the hon. Gentleman. I said before that, if I thought that the question before the House was the relative expense of shipbuilding in English and foreign ports, I should not only consider it a presumption on my part to offer an opinion on the subject to the House, but I should certainly consider that this tribunal was very little qualified to arrive at an accurate result on that point. I do not consider that the question before us is that. It is some consolation to me to believe that those circumstances have very little to do with the question we are called on to decide tonight. I understand the question before us to be this: that the Government have asked us to abrogate an ancient national system with respect to our navigation—a system founded on definite principles, and aiming to arrive at definite ends. None of these ends are the protection of shipbuilders and shipowners, and, therefore, if I can show that the principles on which the national system is founded are sound principles—that they are principles which, in their action, are advantageous to the country and beneficent to the State, then I say that the question of the ability or inability of British shipbuilders and shipowners to enter into competition with foreigners is really not an element of the argument before us. Therefore, I shall be prepared to meet the question totally irrespective of that point which has been brought forward. I will meet it on the broadest ground, and debate it in reference to the very principles which are actually involved. Still, it is due to the tenor of the debate, and respectful to those who have preceded me, that I should not altogether evade that point; and, though I shall not weary the House with details, which, after all, none of us can presume to decide upon (the evidence being so contradictory, so complicated, and so conflicting), and though I will not presume to decide whether the English shipbuilding can compete with foreigners, this I may say, that I am an advocate for an established system, which I maintain has worked with great advantage to the State; and all that is necessary for me to do (and this is a perfectly gratuitous argument on my part) is to show you that your arguments to prove that the British shipping interest can compete with the foreign, are utterly unsubstantial and invalid. What is the first argument brought forward in reference to this matter? It consists in a popular remark, which has been made with an air of candour and fairness on more than one occasion, and has a plausible aspect. It is said that an Englishman has not a protection in the export trade—why then is it necessary that he should be protected in the import trade? That seems a good argument. He is not protected, it is said, proceeding with the argument, in the export trade, and yet he competes successfully with the foreigner; why should he not, then, if unprotected in the import trade, beat the foreigner also in respect to that? But I deny that in the export trade he competes with the foreigner with advantage. I deny that you have produced any evidence on the subject. I deny that there has been any evidence produced in debate with respect to the export trade as to that point. The little we know (for we have no documents of authority and of detail in respect to the export trade) leads me to an opinion exactly the reverse. I should like to see, for instance, a Member for Liverpool get up in his place and tell us that his constituents had competed with foreigners in the export trade with advantage. That would have been a matter pregnant with instruction. But no Member for Liverpool has done that; and every Member of this House, whether he respresents Liverpool, or is a merchant connected with the trade of Liverpool, knows that practically our export trade is in the hands of foreigners. We know very well, for we observe it every day of our lives, that if in respect to America, for instance, the Government there sends an order for iron to England, it makes it a condition that the iron shall be exported in American ships. I learned an instance to this effect within a day or two; and there is a Gentleman in this House, acquainted with and interested in the order. Within this day or two a large order was given by the French Government for coal, and the condition was that it should be exported in French ships. I am not blaming the Government of the United States or the Government of France for this; but when I hear it said that we are not protected in our export trade, and yet we compete with so much success with the foreigner, and when I find no authentic documents to guide us on this point, I am obliged to ask—"Where is your evidence?" In want of such evidence, I must avail myself of information which is open to everybody; and I cannot help arriving at a conclusion totally different from that come to by those who promulgate the opinion that we compete successfully with the foreigner in the export trade. There is another point on which I will not dwell long; but I should not be acting with fairness towards the House if I evaded the question; though I will avoid as much as possible going into details. It has been laid down over and over again in this debate, as a circumstance which ought to decide the question—that England in an open market can compete with any State. How often has it been said during the four or five nights' discussion on the present question, that while the shipping interests are trembling at the idea of competition on the Thames, yet when the Atlantic is only once crossed, or the Adriatic reached, then, at Rio de Janeiro or at Trieste, English shipping carries everything before it. That I admit to be a fair test; and though it has nothing, according to my views, to do with the great question before us, yet it is important in discussion that the test, as it has been offered, should be uncompromisingly accepted. It is in my power to accept it, and I do accept it; and I will show how utterly unfounded is that which is the foundation of the principal argument drawn from the state of the trade with Rio and Trieste. Hon. Gentlemen who have turned their attention to this subject will remember the evidence given before the Committee respecting the trade of Rio. The hon. Member for Stoke seemed somewhat astonished at the results then placed before him, and appeared to doubt whether there was any official evidence of the circumstances offered before the Committee, detailing the trade for the year 1846 at the port of Rio. Now, I have a statement of the trade at Rio in 1847, which has just arrived; and of this document I can say, that, though it has not been offered to the Committee of the House of Commons, it has, before I read it to you, been offered, I believe, to the Committee of the House of Lords on oath. It is a document, the authenticity of which I can venture to affirm. It has at least been placed before the Committee of the House of Lords, under that sanction which we all respect; and though not yet in the papers delivered to this House, it will very soon appear among them. This document is very short, but significant. The hon. Gentleman here read the following statement with respect to the trade of Rio de Janeiro:—

> "In the year 1847, 659 ships, amounting to 198,308 tons, cleared from Rio de Janeiro with cargo, of which were—British, 31,735 tons, and foreign, 166,563; total, 198,308 tons. Of the above 31,735 tons British shipping, 15,388 tons cleared for British ports and possessions, and 16,347 tons for foreign ports—total, 31,735 tons. Of the 659 ships cleared with cargo, 63,753 tons were American, 31,735 tons British, 14,547 tons Brazilian, 13,149 tons Danish, 13,738 tons Swedish, 13,407 tons Hamburgh, 11,283 tons Portuguese, 9,844 tons French, 6,959 tons Sardinian, and 6,409 tons Belgian; 13,484 tons consisting of Austrian, Spanish, Norwegian, Russian, and other foreign ships—total, 198,308 tons."

Thus it appeared that out of a tonnage of 198,000 tons, British shipping commanded only 16,000 tons; for of the 31,000 tons put down for British shipping, more than 15,000 tons cleared for our ports and colonies, and are, therefore, taken out of the bearings of the discussion, and there remain something more than 16,000 tons for foreign ports. This is the return for 1847. Is it possible, in the face of such a document as that, to pretend that British shipping could carry everything before it; and that in open ports it competes successfully with all the nations of the world? Now, I will take the case of Trieste. I take these two instances purposely, because they have been perpetually appealed to in this debate, and because it has been assumed as a fact which no one could deny, that British shipping at Rio and Trieste could compete with the shipping of all the world. I have a return with respect to Trieste, which, though not of a very recent date—not so recent as the return I have just quoted in respect to Rio—I am informed by a house having extensive transactions with Trieste may be taken as correct at the present time in reference to the relative proportions of the shipping. The hon. Gentleman read the following statement with respect to the shipping at Trieste:—

> "A Statement of all the Ships which entered the port of Trieste during the year 1833, each assigned to its proper country. There came from—
>
> "The United States.—21 American, 6 Austrian ships—no British.
>
> "Sumatra.—2 American ships—no British.
>
> "Marseilles.—1 French, 22 Austrian, 4 Neapolitan, 7 Roman, 4 Sardinian ships—but no British.
>
> "Bordeaux.—4 French, 1 Swedish ship—no British.
>
> "Spain.—9 Spanish, 1 Austrian, 1 Russian—no British.
>
> "Hamburgh.—3 Austrian, 3 Prussian—no British.
>
> "Holland.—2 Austrian, 1 Danish—no British.
>
> "Sweden.—2 Swedes—no British.
>
> "St. Domingo.—1 British vessel, which has this vast trade all to itself.
>
> "Norway.—4 Hanoverian, 1 Danish, 1 Dutch, 1 British vessel.
>
> "Cuba.—6 American, 2 Spanish, 1 Belgian, 2 British.
>
> "Portugal.—7 Austrian, 2 Sardinian, 1 Danish, 2 British.
>
> "Gibraltar and Malta, our own possessions.—9 Austrian, 1 Roman, 6 British.
>
> "Brazils.—11 Austrian, 4 American, 3 Danish, 3 Spanish, 3 Sardinian, 1 Hamburgh, 1 French, 1 Neapolitan, 1 Swedish, 42 British."

Thus it was only in reference to one country that there is a majority, and a large majority of English shipping. Now, when we recollect that England exports to Brazil 4,000,000*l.* worth of goods per annum, and receives in return only 1,000,000*l.* of produce per annum, it is clear that the ships which take the 4,000,000*l.* in goods out must be chartered to take 3,000,000*l.* in goods from Brazil to some other ports; and it is to the port of Trieste to which that produce with which Brazil does not directly pay us, is chiefly forwarded. So much, then, for these two cases, which have been appealed to with so much triumph and so little foundation. Before I come to the question of competition, I ought to notice the speech of the hon. Member for Westbury, who is the great champion of the virtues of competition. The hon. Member for Westbury told us, in his speech on the first night of the debate, to show the immense advantage of a relaxation in our system of navigation, that from the year 1817 to the year 1823 British shipping was not only stationary, but absolutely on the decline. The hon. Gentleman said, that in 1817 the tonnage of shipping belonging to the United Kingdom and its dependencies was 2,664,000 tons, and that in 1823 it had declined to 2,506,000 tons. "See, then," said the hon. Gentleman, "notwithstanding the increase of your imports, the consequences of your too strict navigation scheme; see the absolute decline of British shipping. But the moment you passed laws of reciprocity—the moment there was even an approach to the principles of free trade—there was a rapid improvement, and it is from that time that you must date the advance of British shipping." Now, let us look to facts. I do not ask the House for a moment to consider what must be the consequences of peace after a long war of thirty years. I do not even mean to urge, that at the moment selected by the hon. Member for Westbury we had been the carriers of the world, and that the nations of the world resumed their share of the carriage of the world when war ceased. I do not take any advantage of such political or social considerations. The hon. Gentleman referred to the decline of 160,000 tons in the years between 1817 and 1823, and pointed to this as indubitable evidence of decay, while the year 1823 was assigned by him as the date from which the prosperity of our commercial marine began. But the hon. Gentleman forgets that, though the date of the Reciprocity Act was 1823, no increase whatever took place in the tonnage of the mercantile marine of England until 1830, exactly seven years after that Reciprocity Act had passed; and it was only in 1834 that the slow increase of British shipping had arrived at the same amount to which it had reached in 1817. Yet, what is the language of the hon. Gentleman? I must read it to the House—for, mind you, this is the speech of one who is called a master of the subject. These are the subjects, too, which effect changes in opinion—which alter tariffs — which create Ministers. Listen, then, to the language of the hon. Member for Westbury. He said—

> "As he had shown that, when a strict monopoly was maintained (namely, from 1817 to 1823), the shipping trade was in a declining state, and that, immediately after the approach to free-trade principles, there was a rapid increase in the amount of tonnage, it would be admitted that there could be no doubt of the ability of British shipbuilders and British shipowners to compete with foreigners."

The hon. Gentleman then proceeded, and compared the trade of this country, and of all other countries with which we are now on terms of reciprocity, prior to the Reciprocity Act, and the present time, and drew, of course, a conclusion wonderfully conducive to his argument. But the hon. Gentleman took care never to give the name of a single nation, or the date of a single treaty. Our treaty of reciprocity with Russia is only of the date of 1843, and yet the increase of our tonnage in trade with Russia was from 239,000 tons in 1824, to 452,000 in 1846, so that in nineteen out of the twenty-two years, the increase of 200,000 tons was owing to that monopoly which the hon. Member denounces. So, again, I cannot allow his speech to pass without adverting to the great climax of his oration, when he compared our trade with the whole world at the periods of 1824 and 1846. He said that—

> "With regard to our trade with the whole world, he found that in 1824 the tonnage of British shipping entered outwards was 3,291,000 tons, and the tonnage of foreign ships entered inwards 1,385,000 tons. It was true that in 1846 the tonnage of foreign ships had increased to 3,727,000 tons, but the tonnage of English ships had also increased to 8,620,000 tons."

But is it to be credited—I will not stop to say is it creditable—that the ships clearing inwards and outwards are in the second period taken together, while in the first period they are studiously separated? Who can resist the force of such evidence? Who can resist—for it is very difficult to do so—the boldness of such evidence? But this is the evidence which for many years has governed England. This is the evidence which, when brought forward in documents and speeches, has changed the laws and governed the country. It is by a reliance on these documents, and the statistical genius of the country, that you have troubled it to the centre, and filled it with dismay and consternation. I think I have tasted these waters before, and I strongly suspect that the hon. Member for Westbury fills his goblets from the tainted fountains of the Board of Trade. I make no attack upon any one. Since Mr. Porter was before this House he has been cross-examined before the House of Lords.

Mr. J. L. RICARDO objected to any reference to such a document, as out of order.

Mr. SPEAKER decided that the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire was in order.

Mr. DISRAELI: As this is the last night of the debate, I thought it but fair to refer to evidence which, if not on the table of the House, ought to have been delivered. I will now read some questions put to Mr. Porter, and his answers;—

"In a previous answer you give a statement of the progress of British shipping, and you show an increase in 1846 over 1821 of British shipping of 1,256,000 tons. You were led to the inference that there was a much larger increase in British tonnage than there was in American tonnage; but, if the Committee understand your statement now, the increase of the one is an increase upon the whole of the British tonnage, and the increase upon the other is an increase only upon a part of the American tonnage?—It is so.

"Consequently those two are not to be taken as compared together as showing in any degree the comparative increase of British and American tonnage?—Certainly not.

"Have you any means of making an addition with regard to the tonnage of the United States which may lead to a fair comparison with the statement in Return No. 1?—I am not sure that I have; I rather think I have, but I am not certain.

"In the explanation given in your last examination relative to the return of protected and unprotected trades, you stated that if the tonnage to which objection had been made were removed from the unprotected and placed on the protected side, the result would show a greater advantage in favour of unprotected trade than was exhibited by the return in the form in which it was presented; you stated the proportions then were 99.82 per cent on the protected, and 219 per cent on the unprotected?—I have no doubt that is perfectly correct.

"In the whole of that explanation comprised in your answers to questions 75 and 79, you deduced your conclusions from per centage calculations?—I did.

"Do you think that is a fair mode of exhibiting such facts, or one that is likely to lead to just conclusions on such inquiries?—I must confess I am not very fond of using centesimal proportions, but I am driven to do so because other persons have more liking to them than I have, and I am called on to do it. I think the fair and proper way is to take the actual numbers.

"You made a statement before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, did not you, throwing overboard centesimal proportions? Will you read your answer on that subject?—I say, 'I think there is a great deal of fallacy lurking under returns of the description you allude to. It is stated that there is a larger percentage of increase of foreign than of British tonnage. I think I remarked, in reference to one of the tables which I ventured to bring before the Committee, that it sometimes appeared that there was a percentage diminution in the proportion of British ships when there was an increase in the actual amount. It may be very well in a country which has 100 ships, when it gets an increase of 50, to state the increase at 50 per cent; but if a country has 1,000 ships, and there is an increase of 100, that is an increase of only 10 per cent. I think it involves a fallacy when you reason from the per centage.'

"Will you explain to the Committee why, with a conviction that this mode of reasoning was fallacious, you employed it without explaining that possible fallacy in your last examination?—I drew up this table at the desire of one of your Lordships, and in the form that was required?

"Is not the supposed correctness of that enumeration the main argument on which the writer of the article in the *Edinburgh Review* relies for the maintenance of the position it is intended to support ?—I believe it is relied on."

I must not pursue this inquiry further, as it might be tedious. I merely wanted to show Mr. Porter's opinion—his own statement. But I will ask the House what additional confidence they had after that evidence in the returns which were before the House, and which had been so boldly vindicated by the late Vice-President of the Board of Trade. I myself do not think these returns have anything to do with the real question at issue; I shall altogether pass these monstrous returns unnoticed, did I not look upon them as part and parcel of a subtle and dangerous system. It is all very well for men in office to disregard these comments, and to suppose that when an official return is made to this House, no possible objection can be raised to it; but I remember the time when the Poor Law Commission used to be defended in the House in the same manner and by the same means; and yet I have seen, before the slow progress of public opinion, even that mighty tribunal fall. I don't think any person can possibly deny, when he remembers all that has occurred during the last two years — I care not what may be the motive — but I don't believe any one can deny that there has been in the officials of the Board of Trade a bias against the opinions that we, a minority of this House, but I believe not a minority in the country, advocate. There has been, at all times, and under all circumstances, a convenient return ready for any Minister who had some preposterous project to propound. [Mr. Labouchere: No!] The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade seems to demur to that opinion. Having cleared the outworks of my case, I will now approach that of the right hon. Gentleman. I shall certainly, if only from the respect I have for him, not misrepresent him. The right hon. Gentleman not only made a speech, always a dangerous thing—[Sir J. C. Hobhouse: Hear!] No one can say that the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Control often indulges in that sort of thing. In the course of his time he has charmed and excited us; but of late years he has retired a veteran from the field; the result of his experience is now confined to a cheer. But, if it be dangerous to make a speech, it is much more dangerous to publish it, because your speech then becomes a manifesto, and you meet your antagonist on grounds which cannot be misunderstood. The right hon. Gentleman divided the case of the Government under four heads. I will follow him briefly. The right hon. Gentleman first called for this change on account of the claims of the colonies. The right hon. Gentleman was not particularly rich in the evidence with which he favoured the House on that subject. It was meagre. There was a memorial of a suspicious character. No one knows who moved or who originated it; and it was a remarkable circumstance that, like the document quoted by my noble Friend to-night, it bore the date of the 1st of April. But, taking it as it is, the memorial is not of such a puissant nature that one may be afraid to encounter it. Then there was an extract of a despatch from the Governor of another of our colonies (Lord Harris), and another document which is not a memorial. [Mr. Labouchere: It is an address from the Assembly in Canada.] As far as the colonies are concerned, the Government have clearly not made out their case; and, considering how often we are told that the sun of our empire never sets—considering the vast number, I will not say of of our colonies, but at least of our Governors, I think I am justified in saying that the evidence is most meagre. And really when we recollect the Canada Corn Bill of 1844, and the Corn Law Repeal Bill of 1846 — when we recollect the Emancipation and Apprenticeship Bills of 1842, and the non-Apprenticeship and Sugar Duties Bills of 1840 and 1846—when we recollect the amount of capital invested in our colonies upon the faith of solemn Parliamentary pledges—upon the faith of an established and prolonged course of legislative protection, how suddenly those who invested a large amount of capital in mills and the cultivation of the soil were disappointed of the fruits of their enterprise before they could get their first returns, by a revolution which we ourselves created amongst all who were concerned in those interests—are we to feel surprised that men so treated should cling to the first straw that presented itself? But we are told, and I see in the evidence before me, that the island of Antigua demands this change in the navigation laws. Somebody asked why the people of Antigua wanted those laws to be repealed; and no precise motive for their demand could be discovered beyond this, that everything they had been taught to believe important to the mother country having been changed, the inhabitants of Antigua were determined to have a try at this. The evidence gives a faithful representation of the condition of the people of that colony; nor is it wonderful that men in fact ruined and excited by the idea of proceeding in the vicious circle of the Prime Minister, should believe that pouncing upon the navigation laws, and devouring them, might afford them some momentary sustenance. The right hon. Gentleman tells us that in addition to the applications which the Government received from Antigua, and from Canada, they had an application from Australia. Now, I will, with the permission of the House, read a return, the accuracy of which cannot be doubted, as it rests upon statements made by the harbour-masters of the ports from which the vessels referred to sailed. From this it appears that—

> "Between the 1st of January, 1846, and the 30th of June, 1847, sixty-one ships cleared from London for Sidney, of which eighteen loaded cargoes home, and the remaining forty-three proceeded to other places in search of freights. Within the same period twenty-seven ships cleared from London to Hobart Town, of which fourteen loaded home, and thirteen left in ballast. Twenty-five ships cleared from London to Port Philip—twelve loading and thirteen leaving without cargo. And from November 21, 1846, to June 30, 1847, twenty-one ships cleared for Port Adelaide from London, of which seven only obtained cargoes."

I ask you, in the face of that document, who can pretend that our Australian fellow-subjects are suffering by the navigation laws from high freights or want of shipping? But I entirely dismiss on this part of the subject all these considerations. I look to the time when, in the reform and reconstruction of your colonial empire, based on a great system of colonisation, you will find the best source of imperial power and of imperial prosperity; and with that view I would cherish all that remains which is a tie between the mother country and the colonies. Independently of the fact that it is impossible to show that the colonies are suffering from these laws, if I thought there was some partial inconvenience and some slight injury sustained, still I would not relinquish that tie which might be made the foundation of greater interests. Moreover it is quite clear, so far as the West Indies are concerned, that they at first thought the navigation laws would be repealed only so far as regards our own colonies. But the moment it was shown to them, as may be seen by the evidence taken before your Committee, that the repeal must be universal, they felt that Cuba, Brazil, and Manilla would profit more than them; and from that moment they never sought the boon, which they felt to be one utterly inadequate to their views and wants. The next point on which the right hon. Gentleman relied was the long voyage. Now, on this point I cannot arrive at the same conclusion as the right hon. Gentleman. I have ventured to describe the navigation laws as a system founded on fixed principles, and aiming at certain results. It has been said that they have been changed at least a hundred times in the course of 200 years; but I draw from that circumstance an argument exactly the reverse to that intended by those who made the remark. I find that during all that time they have been subjected to a salutary criticism; that their objects have been carefully looked to, and that accordingly they have received those improvements and modifications that they required; and that is the very reason why, instead of having a prejudice against the navigation laws, on that ground I am entitled to assume that they are in a state suited to the necessities of the times. The Chancellor of the Exchequer offered last night an argument of a more sweeping character still. He said, these laws were suspended last year; and therefore what are they worth? But supposing the Chancellor of the Exchequer had suspended the Habeas Corpus Act— [An Hon. MEMBER: Or the Bank Charter Act.] Ay, or the Bank Charter Act, which the right hon. Gentleman suspended last year. How would he argue then? If I could only hold the right hon. Gentleman to his principle in some other cases, he might perhaps be reconciled even to the repeal of the navigation laws. But the navigation laws being a system designed to produce certain results, all I have to ask myself, were the principles on which they were founded equal to the end, and was that end beneficial? That is the only question about which I am concerned. Now, as regards the long voyage; what is the general character of what is called the long voyage? It aims at two objects: the first, to employ your sailors by a voyage, it may be, of 20,000 miles, and that is the maritime question. But there is a commercial question concerned—it aspires to make this country the great depôt of the world. Now, are these objects achieved? There cannot be a doubt that the raw material must be cheaper when brought here by a direct process, and not only cheaper but fresher. It would seem that the result of such a system must be that we should become the emporium of the world. What evidence have you of the reverse? All the cases against the long voyage are exceptional cases. I will refer to the evidence on this point of one individual, a British merchant of high character—Mr. Aylwin—a gentleman who ought to have been examined before the Committee of the hon. Member for Stoke, but who was not examined. Mr. Aylwin published a pamphlet, in which he stated the evidence he intended to have given; and, since then, he has been examined before the Committee of the House of Lords. This gentleman states, with regard to the raw materials of the great peninsula of the East, with which he was most connected, that during his whole experience of that Indian trade, he never remembers but one article, the raw produce of Asia, that on the continent of Europe could be purchased at a lower rate than in England; that this only took place once, and at a time when in that particular article immense speculation had occurred. It was in the year 1824, and the article was indigo, which might then have been purchased at Hamburgh lower than in England. Now, it is always said by the advocates of repeal, that when the raw material may be purchased at a low rate on the continent of Europe, it cannot be brought thence to England. But when you have evidence before your Committees to show that there is only one instance known where a raw material of India could be purchased cheaper on the Continent than in England, what is the practical value of the argument? [An Hon. MEMBER: The cotton of Havre.] Oh, the cotton of Havre! Well, I expected to hear that case brought forward. It is really curious to see how different opinions are adopted by different men on the same subject. I would not venture to give my own opinion on such a topic; and if I did, I should probably only make some general observations, and urge that the case was an exceptional one, where you must weigh the conveniences with the disadvantages—and that in truth is all you well can say, when you do not know too much of a subject. I always endeavour, however, from respect to the House, when I do give my opinion, to make myself master of the subject. But here is a gentleman who knows something about the subject under consideration a gentleman who was Secretary of the London Docks, and who was particularly examined on the point. The gentleman I refer to is Mr. Powles, and he is asked the following question:—

> "Wherever things would be cheap you think they would be sent to England, and you consider that would be a disadvantage to England?—It really is sometimes a great disadvantage to the merchant of England to have goods brought here that he has no reason to calculate upon. Within the last few weeks, to my great surprise I must confess, and to the surprise of all of us in the City, it was stated that it was a grievance that certain cargoes of cotton which were turned aside from Havre because of the troubled state of France could not be brought into this country and sold for home consumption, but must be warehoused for exportation. At the time that occurred cotton was in a more depressed condition in this country than it had been for years. I received last week the cotton circular from Liverpool, in which the writer says that within the memory of man cotton has never been so low as it was that very week; and yet the merchants importing this cotton for the use of the Lancashire manufacturers were to have forced upon them a certain number of other cargoes upon which they could not by any possibility have calculated, and then it was said that the not being able to do this was a grievance arising out of the operation of the navigation laws."

I think that is very *apropos*. He is then asked—

> "Are you as a merchant desirous of repeal, or an important modification of the principles of the navigation laws, as likely to conduce to the advancement of the commercial interest of the country?" His reply is—"I, for one, have no such desire whatever." Then, again—"What do you find the prevailing opinion with regard to the navigation laws in the city of London?" and his answer is, "that there is no desire for a change."

Now, I think I have met the views of the right hon. Gentleman regarding the long voyage, when I show that it is founded on a principle that must produce great advantages; when I produce one merchant who establishes the fact that, so far as India is concerned, one article of raw material, only one, and that in 1824, was at a lower price on the Continent than in England; and when I give the evidence of a practical man, the Secretary of the London Dock Company, to show what is the feeling of the city of London as to this cotton we have heard so much of as lying unsaleable at a French port. Having thus noticed two points to which the right hon. Gentleman called our attention, I will now briefly notice his third point, and that is the indirect carrying trade. Now, remember that the point I wish to impress on the House is, that the navigation laws, right or wrong, form a system founded upon certain principles, and producing certain results, and that they are not like many other laws we have been called upon to discuss, which have been, directly or indirectly, formed for the benefit of a particular interest. I want, then, to know whether, on the point of the indirect carrying trade, there is any principle involved? The object of the indirect carrying trade is to prevent any third Power from appropriating to itself the carrying trade of the world. I never heard the abstract argument on that head fairly met. No one can deny that it is a contrivance in its theory admirably adapted to attain its object. No one can deny if the principle were carried completely into effect that the result intended would be inevitable. But the argument brought against it, is an argument against it, not in theory, but in practice. It is said to be impossible, because it is in the power of other countries to cause you to break through your principle; and the right hon. Gentleman has on that subject exhibited considerable eloquence, and entered into very great detail. It, in fact, formed a most important part of his speech. He confessed that he had acted on pressure from Prussia and the United States; and his general tone was that of a man who had submitted to some degree of menace. It is important that the House should understand our position with Prussia. The right hon. Gentleman had indeed fairly described it, though he afterwards tried to soften down his own description. He would not say that Prussia had used a menace, but he said that he had been warned. But another right hon. Gentleman, who was not now in office, though in the secrets of the Government, let the cat out of the bag. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester (Mr. M. Gibson) said the Prussian Minister had delivered a threatening notice to the Government. Let us see what Prussia can do in this respect. What I am going to read is a very brief statement, but it is a statement very well worthy of attention. It is not a threatening notice by a foreign Minister, but most interesting evidence given before a Committee of the other House of Parliament. The gentleman who gives the evidence has been, and his family before him have been, shipbuilders for upwards of 150 years—a period almost as long as that for which the navigation laws have endured. It is one of those families of which this country is as proud as of any of our great patrician houses. Mr. Tindall is a shipbuilder and shipowner at Scarborough. He received his education in Prussia, and no doubt was master of all the details. He is asked—

> " Are not British ships able to import cargoes from all parts of the world into Prussia ?—Yes; but it is of no use. Prussia has no ports to import into. There is one port, Pilau, with 11 feet of water over the bar. There is also Memel, but Memel bar prevents all ships from entering with cargoes. They load at the open roadsteads. They take in 50 or 100 load to keep them stiff, that is, upright, and then they go into the roads to fill up. At Dantzic they have only six feet of water over the bar, and have, therefore, made an artificial entrance, by which they go above the bar, and are enabled to take small vessels up to Dantzic. By this artificial entrance, a hole in the mud, they have 11 or 12 feet depth of water.
>
> "Although this law has existed for so many years on the part of Prussia, it has never been of the smallest use to us ?—Never."

This is the law they are going to abrogate, which is the foundation of the menace of Prussia.

> " Has not Prussia threatened to withdraw the law if we do not repeal our navigation laws ?—She has; but it is of no consequence, the thing is quite ridiculous. Would it be of the least importance whether that treaty of reciprocity with Prussia existed or not ?—Not a bit.
>
> "Would it not be of importance if Germany were to follow the example?—That is quite another thing. If Prussia were to get possession of Hamburgh, which I suppose she is aiming at, and getting possession of the ports in the North Sea, that would be quite a different thing. To Cuxhaven they may get up the river with any draught of water; and then, if they could get possession of the Elbe, they would have the possession of the inlet into Germany."

The motives to the invasion of Denmark might be inferred. It must be a source of great satisfaction to every Member of this House to see with what spirit and energy that gallant little nation has opposed their unscrupulous invasion. You see, Mr. William Tindall, who is acquainted with the subject, knows the Prussian object exactly. If the Prussians could get up the river at Cuxhaven, and get possession of the ports in the North Sea, then they would be able to manage the President of the Board of Trade. Such is the opinion of a practical man on this bugbear, which in debate after debate, and discussed, as it has been, in article after article, is to frighten us into changing the ancient maritime charter of our country? These are the right men to have before you for examination on such a subject, not a parcel of foreigners, Continental clerks, and American captains. The House of Lords had chosen a different class of witnesses. Then there was the evidence of Mr. Anderson:—

"Are you aware that Prussia has given notice to the Government that she will impose the lastage or tonnage duty afresh?—Yes, I have heard so.

"It is perfectly competent for the Prussians to do so, if they choose?—Yes; and I wish they had never been asked to take it off. They would soon have done it themselves. It would have drawn all their trade to Courland and Livonia.

"Those ports are not accessible all the year round?—No; neither are the Prussian ports.

"Stettin is?—No; there is very little difference in that respect. Memel and Dantzic and the mouths of the Oder are blocked up with ice in winter, perhaps not so soon as Riga."

Yet now we are told, that whether the anvigation laws are right or wrong, we cannot retain them, because, if we attempt to do so, we shall lose the benefit of our treaty with Prussia. Is it possible, after such an opinion expressed by a most competent witness, to listen with calmness to such suggestions? A gentleman whom I formerly quoted, Mr. Powles, is asked—

"Suppose that Prussia and the German League were to pass a navigation law against us, restricting us in all our dealings as we restrict them, could we go on then as we are?—Since we have established with Prussia, which we did in 1822, the Reciprocity Acts, I am not aware that Prussia has any grievance to complain of.

"Are you not aware that Prussia has given us notice that she means to put an end to these reciprocity treaties, and to pass restrictions against our commerce, in retaliation for those which we have passed against her?—We receive timber in a Prussian ship at the same rate of duty that we do in a British ship.

"You have not seen the letter of Chevalier Bunsen on the subject?—No.

"Assume that they should pass these retaliatory acts against us?—I think we are quite competent to fight our own battles.

"Should we be in the same position as we are now?—If we just maintain our own position, and continue as we are, we are able to do it against all the world, so far as the navigation laws are concerned.

"Then are the Committee to understand you to say we should not be in the same position we are now?—It is stated that Prussia proposes to abolish the Reciprocity Act, which Reciprocity Act was of her own seeking; she insisted that her timber should come in her own ships at the same rate of duty that it did in our own ships; we have conceded that; and, therefore, why she is to complain of the Act that established that perfect reciprocity I am not able to comprehend.

"Can you state in what way she could retaliate?—I do not believe she has the power to do it.

"What trade is there between England and Prussia in which she could retaliate to our injury?—None that I am aware of."

Who is the man that says this? The Secretary of the Docks in London—the greatest emporium in the world. Then we are to give up the indirect carrying trade because there is this menace of Prussia, which I have shown on the best evidence to be the most preposterous and ridiculous threat that could possibly be held out. I am quite astonished that Her Majesty's Ministers could submit to anything of the kind. Had it not been pressed in a glow of rhetoric by the right hon. Member for Manchester, acknowledging that at his office they were in the habit of receiving threatening notices in this behalf, I could not have believed it. Then there is the message of the United States. That is not a menace. It is only an invitation. They will give little if we give little; they will give much if we give much; they will give all if we give all. I have no doubt the United States will give little if we give little. But I defy them to give us much if we give them much. What can they give us? It is in fact a very remarkable message, because exactly as the hon. Member for Liverpool said yesterday, putting the case very properly, it involves the very principle of reciprocity which you would abjure. The offer of Mr. Bancroft was an offer of reciprocity. It was that or nothing. I do not mean to touch on the "most favoured nation" clause; but it will be a singular spectacle to see a Minister of the Crown abjure reciprocity on the one hand, while he advocates retaliation on the other. That will be one of the most extraordinary specimens of official logic which the House has ever known. The House will, perhaps, remember when I impressed the late Government with the propriety and the prudence of making themselves maters of the difficulties they would have to encounter before they entered into such treaties; but here we have Ministers who tell us that the principle of reciprocity is to be accepted; the Chancellor of the Exchequer gives his adhesion to the principle; but although they are ready to adopt the principle, they acknowledge that they are totally ignorant of the consequences of adopting it. If, then, the Government which has ceased, and the Government which exists, are both in favour of the principle of reciprocity, and both are ignorant of the difficulties they will have to contend with in carrying it into effect, don't you think that under the circumstances it would be more prudent to keep to the present system until you are better acquainted with the position we are in, and Her Majesty's Ministers are more familiar with the facts? Is it not monstrous that we should have a message from Mr. Bancroft, making an offer involving the commercial interests of England, and that we should be recommended by a Minister of the Crown to accept that offer, and that before the debate upon it was over, another Minister—a Cabinet Minister—should abjure the principle of reciprocity? This is trifling with the national interest in a reckless manner—in a most reckless manner, for nothing is more fatal than the recklessness of ignorance. Everything that is clear and known we can meet; but a Government or a Cabinet which calls upon us to legislate without knowing the circumstances under which the measure will place us, proposes a legislative anarchy, a course which must eventually involve us in inextricable confusion. I am not surprised that the right hon. Gentleman quitted an office which brought him into contact with a Foreign Minister who sent threatening notices to him. I do not wonder that he should be glad to leave. It was, rather singular, however, that, deprived of the services of so eminent a civilian, the Government should have had recourse to such an expedient as making the Master of the Buckhounds the Vice-President of the Board of Trade. If they wanted some one to defend them, why not have appointed the Commander-in-Chief? Though, to be sure, if an angry Foreign Minister were to call upon them, a Master of the Buckhounds, booted, spurred, and equipped at all points, might offer a formidable appearance. It was difficult to resist picturing the perplexing position of the Vice-President between the rival Muses of Prussia and the United States. On one side, the bland smiles and the winning accents of Mr. Bancroft; on the other, Mr. Bunsen with the dagger and the bowl. Before we come to a decision upon this question, let me remind the House of the nature of the vote we are about to give. It has been said that the Amendment proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stamford, is an Amendment hostile to any change in our code of navigation. Now, let it be understood that we do not oppose going into Committee *quâ* Committee; but we do oppose it when the Minister comes forward and tells us that he is going into Committee to abrogate the navigation laws. What we say is, that after such a declaration, it is a mockery to ask us to go into Committee. We are ready to go into Committee to improve the navigation laws, but we will not go into Committee to abrogate them. There is one thing more which, after what has been said, it would be scarcely respectful to the House to pass by, and it is, I think, due to the tenor of the debate to notice it; it is the question of our national defences. I shall not go into the evidence of Sir James Stirling. I understand the plan he has suggested is a very ingenious plan; it is a plan of manning the fleet without men; nor am I going to sing "Rule, Britannia," because that must be distasteful to the hon. Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire. Since I began to address the House a document has been put into my hand, which I hope the House will indulge me by allowing me to read, and it is the last thing I will read. In the *New York Sun* is a statement which is represented as coming "from Jamaica," and which gives a short and lively account of the state of society there:—

> "A correspondent of the *Courrier des Etats-Unis*, under date of the 12th of April, says that even in that city (Kingston) symptoms of discontent are showing themselves. A petition signed by 300 persons was presented asking the convocation of an extraordinary Colonial Parliament to reduce taxes and protest against the proceedings of the mother country (England). The Governor received the deputation very coolly, and read them a severe lecture; they were to meet in the public square on the 13th, and 500 persons were to go in person to the Governor, in order to secure his acquiescence in their demands. At the

theatres 'Rule, Britannia' was played in meaning silence, and 'Yanke Doodle' loudly called for and encored."

To-night we, too, have had "Yankee Doodle" called for; but I hope that, though loudly called for, it will never be encored in this House. Sir, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester the other night, in a glowing peroration, dwelt upon the blessings of peace; and I can account for that peroration being delivered in 1848, by reference to the two years' silence imposed upon him in this House from peculiar circumstances. Had that peroration been delivered when it was composed in the hall of Manchester, or in the hired seat of the Muses which the labours of the right hon. Gentleman have contributed to render so classical, it would have had an admirable effect. The right hon. Gentleman has described the present age as one of commerce, peace and internal improvement. I had no idea previously that such were the characteristics of the age; I thought that instead of commerce, we had no trade; instead of peace, impending war; and as for internal improvements, my only idea of them is a band of Communists tearing up a railway. I cannot help thinking, after what has occurred since the beginning of this eventful Session, and, since the announcement of that millennium in February which produced such a sensation throughout the land, that in the present state of affairs—after all that has occurred in Europe—with Naples in a state of siege; Paris in insurrection; Vienna in revolt; and Berlin barricadoed; with four pitched battles fought in Europe in eight weeks, and the Baltic and the Adriatic alike blockaded —I cannot help thinking that even the hon. Member for the West Riding himself can scarcely be so devout a believer as he was in the *quies gentium sine armis.* I do not pretend—I have not any claim—to that prophetic power which the hon. Gentleman and his school so pre-eminently possess; but in reading the past we may sometimes find some guiding admonitions for the conduct of the present. And certainly in reading our annals I find no reason for withdrawing my allegiance from that arm of military power, which, in this country, has at the same time created empire and cherished liberty. Amid the fall — to which my noble Friend has referred—amid the fall of thrones and the crash of empires around us, I know of no circumstance more remarkable than that strange anarchy and that mysterious demoralisation which have lately fallen upon those vast armies which were once considered the best mainstay of power and authority. I cannot help thinking that when we have heard the startling accounts of those hosts of France, Austria, and Prussia, which have deserted their masters in their hour of need—I cannot help thinking that an Englishman must have remembered with pride, and perhaps with satisfaction, that our legions reposed upon the waters. At least I will not incur the responsibility, by my vote, of endangering that empire, gained by so much valour, and guarded by so much vigilance —that empire broader than both the Americas, and richer than the farthest Ind— which was foreshadowed in its infancy by the genius of a Blake, and consecrated in its culminating glory by the blood of a Nelson—the empire of the seas.

MR. WILSON rose for the purpose of correcting a statement of the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down. He was quite sure that hon. Gentleman would not willingly misrepresent the statements of another; but in speaking of his (Mr. Wilson's) speech the other evening, wherein he referred to the amount of tonnage entered outward and inward in 1846, as compared with 1824, the hon. Gentleman said that he (Mr. Wilson) took in the latter year only the amount of tonnage entered outwards, while in the former he took the amount of tonnage both outwards and inwards. He begged to correct the hon. Gentleman in that assertion. If the hon. Member would refer to the Custom-house returns—not to those of the Board of Trade—he would find that he had in both cases referred to the aggregate amount of tonnage inwards and outwards. As the hon. Member stated he was anxious to make himself thoroughly acquainted with all the facts he mentioned, he (Mr. Wilson) could not but express his regret that he had not done so in the present instance.

SIR R. PEEL was met on rising by cries of "Divide!" The right hon. Baronet said: After the speeches made by the noble Lord, the hon. Gentleman who spoke last, and the other hon. Gentlemen who have addressed the House during this debate, anxious to explain the grounds on which their votes will be given, I do not make any unreasonable claim on the indulgence of the House if I ask leave to occupy a very much smaller share of your attention for the same purpose. If I could fully acquiesce in the opinions avowed by the noble Lord, and by those who concur with him, that the experience of the last two years has been sufficient to demonstrate the impolicy of those principles of legislation on which in the years 1842 and 1846, the commercial tariff of this country was reviewed and regulated, I should not be surprised at their unwillingness to apply the same principles to the commercial marine of the empire. But, Sir, notwithstanding that experience of the last two years, my opinion remains unshaken as to the principles by which your commercial intercourse should be regulated with other countries. If, indeed, you altogether reject from your consideration that peculiar combination of circumstances which has prevented the possibility of any fair trial of the principles then acted upon —if you will shut out from your consideration that in addition to many other causes of commercial derangement, all operating simultaneously, not only your own country, but every other country of Continental Europe with which you have commercial dealings, has been visited by the infliction of famine—if you will omit from your consideration the fact that the surplus capital which has been heretofore applied to the purchasing of luxuries or of conveniences, has been necessarily absorbed in averting the sufferings which famine engendered—if you will reject all those considerations, it will be easy to draw such conclusions as those to which you have come. But I say it is incumbent on you to show in what one respect there is any connection between the present suffering of this country, which I admit and deplore, and the principles which regulated your commercial policy in 1842 and 1846. It surely is not because you have admitted raw material without duty that— [*Interruption.*] Surely this is not a matter to be disposed of by clamour, but by deliberate reason. It is possible the opinions I avow may be erroneous; but, depend on it, you show no confidence in the strength of your own, if you have no better answer to give me than boisterous clamour. Answer me, if you can, these arguments. The principles on which the House acted in 1842 and 1846, in the first place, removed restrictions from the importation of corn, and reduced the duties on raw material. They enabled you to enter into competition with foreign rivals at great comparative advantage—they simplified your commercial code with respect to the entry of all articles necessary for your manufacturers; and it will, I presume, be impossible for any one to contend that the altered tariff injuriously affected the manufactures of the country, so far as these provisions of the new law were concerned. You will say that these provisions might be wise on abstract principles, but that we erred in that we admitted the competition of foreign manufactured articles. That is the ground of objection. You contend that every single article of foreign manufacture introduced in consequence of the new tariff, has contributed to throw out of employment hundreds of those in this country who were engaged in manufactures of the same kind. What a doctrine to hold in this great manufacturing country! Here is a country exporting in declared value manufactured goods to the extent of 58,000,000*l.* annually —a country which, by the exports of its manufactures, is interfering with the employment of every other country on the face of the earth; and in this country such a doctrine is to be established! If other countries were to adopt these principles, they would naturally look on you, not as the benefactor of mankind, but as the greatest impediment to human happiness, interfering with their labour, and destroying their means of industrious occupation. A small quantity of silk, of gloves, of cotton, and of woollen manufacture, is brought into this country of the declared value, probably, of one million per annum. You contend that the countries which send here those comparatively small quantities of manufactured goods ought to be denounced, because they are throwing out of employment a number of manufacturers, who would otherwise be employed. But in the first place, you must deduct all the manufactured goods of the same kind which came in illicitly, in consequence of your vain attempts at prohibition — you must deduct the quantities of silk, and of gloves, that were smuggled, in spite of and in consequence of those prohibitory duties of 40 and 50 per cent, which you appear anxious to restore. There appears to be an increase in importation, but it is only apparent, not real. You kept up at your ports a great army of custom-house officers, vainly attempting to prevent the illicit introduction of silks and gloves and other articles which came in without the payment of duties— which, though subject to the enormous duties of 30 or 40 per cent, were guaranteed to be delivered from Paris at a charge of 10 per cent. By the adoption of a wiser policy you permitted those articles to enter upon the payment of reduced duties, and there is, in consequence, a nominal increase of imports. But there is no real increase in the competition which some hon. Members so much deplore. In these papers there is the proof that you are exporting 1,315,000*l.* worth of brass and copper goods, 1,000,000*l.* of earthenware, 1,000,000*l.* of haberdashery goods, 17,000,000*l.* of cotton goods, 6,000,000*l.* of cotton yarns, woollen, linen, and silk—all interfering with the industry of other countries; and yet you complain of other countries, because they ask you to permit them to supply you in some very inferior and subordinate degree with certain articles which they can manufacture cheaper than you. How is it possible when you export 58,000,000*l.* in declared value of articles of British manufacture—how is it possible that the import of any such quantity of silk, cotton, and woollen goods, as has been introduced since 1846, can be assigned as the cause of the distress under which the operatives in some parts of the country are at present labouring? Let us look at the general results. Do not take a single year, but look what is the progressive increase of your exports under the system of free trade. Take successive periods of five years since 1827, and then judge whether there is cause for despondency, although from a combination of extraordinary causes we have been suffering severe distress. Beginning with the year 1827—twenty years ago—I find that in the first period of five years the average declared value of our exports amounted to 37,000,000*l.*; in the second they amounted to 43,000,000*l.*; in the third, to 49,000,000*l.*; and in the fourth to 55,000,000*l.* Now, in the year 1847—a year of severe distress—what was the declared value of our exports? It is said that we do nothing but import—that we have no corresponding amount of exports—and that we purchase all our imports with gold. But what was the declared value of our exports in the year 1847? Observe that in the five years ending 1846, the declared value of our exports was 55,000,000*l.* Well, in the year 1847 they amounted to 58,971,000*l.* They increased from 37,000,000*l.* in the first series of five years to 55,000,000*l.* in the five years ending 1846; and in 1847 — the year of severe distress — they increased to 58,971,000*l.* Now, just recollect what the state of the country was; what were the impediments to our usual exports in consequence of the sudden demand for food. I confess I am surprised to find such an amount of exports under circumstances so unfavourable. I am only referring to these things because some Gentlemen have stated that they founded the vote they were to give to-night upon the assumed failure of the principle of free trade. So far from admitting that failure, the experience of the last two years has served to convince me, that it is upon the diminished price of food, and upon that guarantee of its continuance, which unrestricted import affords, that we have to rest the hope of our prosperity.

I am sorry I have been tempted to depart, even for a few moments, from the subject immediately before the House; but I will now strictly address myself to it. Her Majesty's Government proposes that we should listen to a proposition for considering the present state of the navigation laws, with a view to extensive and important improvements. In my opinion, we are arrived at one of those periods when, as heretofore, it is desirable to take this matter into serious consideration. If I look to the position of our colonies, in consequence of the application of the principles of free trade to many articles of their produce—if I look to the fact that many European countries have found out that they have a fair claim to insist on those privileges in navigation which we insist on for ourselves—if I look to our reciprocity treaties, and to the various complicated claims arising under them—if I look to the mutilated and shattered state of the navigation laws, as they now exist, I find a number of concurrent reasons for the conclusion that those laws cannot stand on their present foundation, but that we must consider them with a view to extensive change. In the whole course of the able and ingenious speech of the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire—from the personal allusions of which the House derived so much amusement—I must say, that the hon. Gentleman scarcely touched the question really before us. If the hon. Gentleman could have shown that the relaxation of the navigation laws would diminish the means of our national defence, or endanger our national security, I think, differing in that respect from the Member for the West Riding (Mr. Cobden) — that there would be a fatal objection to any proposal accompanied by such a risk. But it is absolutely necessary for those who maintain the navigation laws to show that their maintenance is necessary for the purpose of national defence. Surely all presumption is against them. ["Oh, oh!"] Why, the great authority whom you quote in their favour—Adam Smith—begins with an admission fatal to the navigation laws, unless you can show that they are necessary to our defence. In an emphatic sentence he declares that the navigation laws are unfavourable to commerce, and to the growth of wealth, which is the product of commerce. Surely this is a condemnation of these laws so far as commerce is concerned. How can we doubt that in this great seat of manufacturing industry—the greatest commercial country in the world — how can we doubt, I say, that upon all ordinary commercial principles, obstructions to the free interchange of products are injurious to prosperity? Prove if you can that this being a country with an extended colonial empire, with a small military force kept up for our protection, depending altogether on our marine defences, must encourage a commercial marine without reference to commercial considerations; and that is an argument which I will listen to. But will any one contend, apart from the question of national defence, that to throw obstacles in the way of sending our manufactures abroad, and to prevent other countries from dealing with us by enhancing the cost of conveyance, is consistent with sound commercial policy?

The practical question before us is, whether we shall assent to the proposition of Her Majesty's Government, or to the proposal of my right hon. Friend (Mr. Herries), who moves not a direct negative to the question, but a resolution that it is expedient to maintain the fundamental principles of the existing navigation laws. While he moves this resolution, he distrusts his own doctrine, for he goes on to say, "subject to such modification" as the House may think fit. Where then is the difference between the two propositions? I can understand the object of the right hon. Gentleman if he had moved an instruction to the Committee; but he says, "I will permit you to go into Committee—I will give you no instructions, but I will fetter you with a previous resolution, that you shall not infringe on the fundamental principle of the navigation laws." What, I ask, are those fundamental principles? What was the object which they originally contemplated? According to Adam Smith, national animosity had effected an object which consummate wisdom might have aimed at—namely, the destruction of the naval power and maritime influence of the Dutch. What is the present bearing of your navigation laws upon the marine of those formidable rivals? You deprive yourselves of any intercourse with America, excepting that which comes direct to this country. You can, it is true, take the produce of your own country out to the United States. But the Dutch, whom the navigation laws were intended to injure, can, under the present system, take their produce to the United States, and your produce also, and have a direct advantage over you in your intercourse with America. The whole of the commerce of the United States is open to them. One half of the whole consists in British commerce: that of course is open to them; and, therefore, to those formidable competitors, whose maritime power you sought to destroy by your navigation laws, you have given the whole of the trade with the United States, restricting yourselves to that part of it which consists of direct commercial intercourse with this country. The restrictive principle of the navigation laws, as laid down by Adam Smith, is justly applicable to the coasting trade — the fisheries—the direct carrying trade—and the colonial trade. Well, the coasting trade and the fisheries are to be reserved by Government. The carrying trade with other countries—the navigation laws reserved exclusively to British vessels, or foreign vessels importing the produce of their own country. Now, my right hon. Friend (Mr. Herries) says that he concurred with Mr. Huskisson in the introduction of reciprocity treaties. Nay, he says that he is prepared to carry them further than they go. Then I reply, that the fundamental principles of the navigation laws are opposed to those treaties. There never was a wider breach made in the navigation laws than that effected by these treaties; and yet my right hon. Friend, who is prepared to approve of them, moves a resolution, pledging the House not to permit any infringement of the fundamental principles of the navigation laws. But my right hon. Friend says that he is willing to carry the reciprocity treaties still further. Now, I will convince him that those who rely upon his assistance have given a very decided opinion that the introduction of reciprocity treaties was a violation of the principle of the navigation laws fatal to British commerce. In the Committee Mr. Young was asked—

> "Do you consider that the navigation law, as it now stands, affords adequate protection to British ships?—No, I don't think it does, because the principles upon which it is founded are entirely abrogated with reference to direct trade with all the countries with which we have reciprocity treaties."

And Mr. Richmond says, in answer to a question—

> "I cannot consider that the navigation laws afford us much protection now; they are completely mutilated. Every reciprocity treaty has taken something away. I was not aware that there was so little left as there is. In fact, I consider the navigation laws virtually repealed now."

This is the evidence of a gentleman of the highest respectability, one who has been examined no less than four times before Committees of this House. He and Mr. Young are the two witnesses put forward as men of experience and practical knowledge, on whom the greatest reliance can be placed, and they declare that those very reciprocity treaties to which my right hon. Friend was a party, and which he is prepared to extend, have so mutilated the navigation laws that hardly a remnant of them is left. And yet my right hon. Friend will not allow you to go into Committee unless we are fettered with the resolution that we will maintain the fundamental principle of the navigation laws. If in Committee we should propose to touch the colonial trade, my right hon. Friend will exhibit his fundamental principle, and scare us back within the proper limits to our interference. But why should not Mr. Richmond exhibit his fundamental principle also, and show you that the reciprocity treaties are the fatal breach in the navigation laws. The coasting trade, whether wisely or not, is to be reserved, and the fisheries are to be reserved; and my right hon. Friend being ready to extend the reciprocity treaties, there only remains your colonial intercourse to be considered. Now, with respect to that intercourse, what changes have not been made? Since the day when Adam Smith wrote, your colonial intercourse has been constantly modified according to the necessities of the case. It is on a perfectly different footing from what it was then, and necessarily so. Adam Smith, writing about the year 1775, did not foresee the separation of the North American colonies from this country, and the changes consequent thereupon. From the time in which he wrote, scarcely three years had passed without a very considerable violation of the main principle of the navigation laws; and at every period of unavoidable change we find the same predictions of ruin to British shipping which I hear on the present occasion. In 1782, when you proposed to admit Ireland to a direct intercourse with the West Indies, the House of Commons resisted the proposition. In vain the Government urged the House to agree to the Motion; the port of Liverpool declared that if the privileges of dealing directly in coffee and sugar with the West Indies, were granted to Ireland, she would be reduced to her original insignificance. So it was with every other relaxation. Sir, it was in 1825, when Mr. Huskisson, not acting as a theoretical speculator, but driven by the necessity of the case, proposed the reciprocity treaties. He proposed those treaties, because the alternative offered was either reciprocity of intercourse or retaliation of exclusion. That period is again fast approaching; for foreign countries will ere long retaliate upon you the exclusive system you establish in your own favour. You will then be driven either to retaliation, which is the war of differential duties, or to place other countries with respect to shipping and duties upon shipping upon the same footing with yourselves. There have been continued relaxations of the navigation laws; and it is well to inquire whether or no any one of these relaxations have clipped the wings of British shipping, and diminished the naval power of the nation. In 1833 there was raised a warning cry; and let me quote it here to put the House upon its guard against those gloomy predictions of approaching ruin, of which we have heard so much. In 1833 the Shipowners' Society, talking of the state of British shipping under the navigation laws, declared—

> "That the declining quality and estimation of British tonnage, and the approaching decay and ruin of the British shipowner, may now be viewed as incontrovertible positions."

Be it so. If the ruin and decay of British shipping under the navigation laws are "incontrovertible positions," shall we run much risk in modifying those laws? But in point of fact the Shipowners' Society was wrong. In 1833, the very time when the ruin and decay of the shipowner might be viewed as "incontrovertible positions,"—in that very year the British tonnage on the register was 2,634,000 tons. In 1846, after the progressive application of the principle of reciprocity treaties, and consequent infraction of the navigation laws, the amount of British tonnage was no less than 3,817,000 tons, showing an increase of 1,183,000 tons. Mr. Richmond says—

> "I am sure that I do not exaggerate when I say that one-half of the capital embarked in shipping during the last twenty-five years has been lost, and that the other half, to a very great extent, is totally unproductive of profit. Indeed, so little is there left of the navigation laws, that I look upon them as virtually repealed."

Now, this gentleman is a great authority on these matters. According to him, under those very navigation laws, the fundamental principles of which you won't let us change, one-half of the capital embarked in shipping during the last twenty-five years has been lost, and the other half remained almost wholly unproductive. Such is the opinion of him who was four times examined before Committes of this House; such statements are made, not merely to excite your sympathy, but to enlighten your judgment; and if one-half the capital embarked in the shipping trade has been sunk, and the other half is unproductive of profit, can it be for the benefit of your commerce, or your manufactures, or your shipping, that such a state of things should continue? Will the discontinuance of it affect other and equally important interests? Will it endanger our maritime superiority? I find, from returns on the table, that notwithstanding the repeated breaches in the old navigation laws, there has been a progressive increase in the number of our ships, in the tonnage, and in the number of men employed. I will only go into the general facts; I will not detain the House with details. I will take the year 1836 that I may not subject myself to the charge of selecting a year favourable for my own views. In 1836 the tonnage of British shipping was 2,792,000 tons; in 1842 it was 3,419,000 tons; and in 1847, a year when free trade, according to the predictions of some, ought to have been fatal to our commercial marine, it amounted to 3,952,000 tons. Then take the number of seamen. The number of seamen in the British commercial marine, in 1814, was 172,000; in 1827 the number was 154,000; in 1842 the number was 214,000; and in 1847 it was 232,000. It is upon the extent of your commercial marine and number of your seamen that your main reliance must be placed in the event of war. As to the question of impressment, the difficulty inherent in that question applies equally to your system whether you maintain the navigation laws or abrogate them. In either case you may resort, if you think fit, to impressment; but is not the time arrived when it is important to consider whether you can safely rely upon impressment? I do not say one word in favour of the abandonment of that system. It may be necessary at the breaking out of a war to resort to it; but consider the material changes that have taken place in your naval marine as well as in your commercial marine; consider that, after the duration of a very long peace, the men whom you impress will be much less qualified to perform the duties of a man-of-war than they used to be when there was only a short interval of peace—when there were rapid alternations of peace and war. Consider how much more important it will be for your naval security to have skilled and experienced mariners. Consider the progress steam navigation has made; how little reliance can be placed on mere impressment to supply the means of navigating steam ships. All these things are deserving most serious consideration. If the repeal of the navigation laws would impair your commercial marine, this would be a powerful argument against their repeal. But my opinion is that this country, without such factitious aid, can enter into competition with any country in the world. Mr. Richmond says that under the system of protection the shipowners have lost half their capital, and derived no profit from the other half. The Member for Buckinghamshire, speaking of the Baltic trade, remarked, that the Baltic Powers have ports that are closed with ice for four months of the year. Compare, then, the favoured position and climate of this country with that of the Baltic Powers; consider the enormous natural disadvantage under which as maritime Powers they labour in having their ports for four months of the year closed with ice. With those Powers, as to the general commerce of the world, you surely have no need to fear competition. Then take France; France has a strict system of navigation laws, and what has it done for her mercantile marine? Do you fear competition with that country? Does not the state of the mercantile marine of France suggest a doubt whether maritime superiority does not depend upon natural causes, upon the the habits, position, and necessities of a country, and not upon navigation laws? No navigation laws, however exclusive, can give to France a commercial marine that can enter into competition with yours. Now, take the United States. The evidence of your increasing marine as compared with that of the United States, in all cases wherein you enter into fair competition, has been most satisfactory as to the ability of this country to compete with America. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire referred to the trade with Rio Janeiro, and added that in that port there was a larger number of American ships as compared with British ships. With great deference to the hon. Gentleman, I do not think that that has anything to do with the question. There is a direct intercourse between Rio Janeiro and the United States. Rio Janeiro takes her sugar to the United States, and they in return send their wheat to Rio Janeiro, and there is no doubt a special intercourse between them with which it is impossible for us to compete; but it is no proof of our general inability to enter into competition with the United States, that in a port where there is a large direct trade with the United States, we should have fewer ships than that Power. I will not venture into statistical details, but I must refer to the evidence of one witness who made a deep impression on my mind. That witness was Captain Briggs. He was master of an American liner, and employed in the direct communication between the United States and England. I never saw a witness whose evidence appeared to me more entitled to credit. If there was an exception, it was in his unwillingness to give an answer unfavourable to the marine of this country, as compared with his own. We examined him on the important point, whether or no we are unable to compete with the United States, on account of any circumstance that can justly entitle our marine to protection? We are told, that we cannot compete with the ships of some countries on account of the low rate of wages paid to the shipwrights. In the first place, I believe that a shipwright in this country at 6*s*. a day is worth three times more than the shipwright of some countries who receives only half the sum. It is impossible to estimate the value of labour by the amount of wages paid to the labourer. We went through the whole of this question with Captain Briggs. We asked him, "What are the wages of a shipwright in America?" His answer was—"They are 10*s*. a day—two dollars on the average have for the last four or five years been paid to an American shipwright." It is quite clear, therefore, that if you rely on the fact that Norwegian ships can be built at less expense than yours on account of the comparative lowness of the wages paid to the Norwegian shipwrights, you must admit that you, who pay only 5*s*. or 6*s*. a day for a British shipwright, a first-rate workman, can compete with great advantage with the Americans, who pay 10*s*. a day to an American shipwright. Then the wages of seamen have been relied on. We asked Captain Briggs what wages he paid? He said—to an American seaman 64*s*. a month. Those were very high wages; but we asked him whether he always employed American seamen? He answered that he did not, but constantly took English seamen from Liverpool. We asked him whether he paid them 64*s*.? He said, No; he took English sailors at Liverpool, and paid them 50*s*.; consequently, an American seaman receives 14*s*. a month more than English seamen: the wages, then, both of shipwrights and seamen are greatly in our favour. We then proceeded to examine him as to the comparative expense of shipbuilding in the two countries. Now, the Member for Buckinghamshire says, he detests the tar and pitch of this question; but the tar and the pitch and comparative expense of building are most important elements of the question. It may be very agreeable to select this or that Gentleman and hold him up to ridicule; but the real points of this case that are worthy of the consideration of rational men, alarmed about our national strength, are not whether this or that Gentleman has involved himself in some inconsistency, but whether we can compete with foreign countries without exclusive privileges, unfavourable to commerce; and you must listen to some of these details if you wish to form a sound judgment. As to the Baltic trade, I think you cannot be under any apprehension. I want to show that there is no fear of France, who, with her strict navigation laws, has a dwindling marine; and I want also to show you that the prosperity and increasing shipping of America are not inconsistent with your own; nay, that they are rather the indications of your prosperity. Open a free commercial intercourse with the United States, and there will be a reciprocal benefit. The increase of your prosperity will, as a natural and necessary consequence, promote the prosperity of the American marine. But I return to the question whether you are able or not to compete with the United States. We asked Captain Briggs, "How do you stand in respect to timber?" Captain Briggs said, "The timber comes from South Carolina and from Florida—there is a shipment and an unshipment;" and he very much doubted whether or no, as this country was a great emporium for timber, the Americans had any great advantage over us. We asked him, "Where do you get your sails and canvass from?"—"From England." "Your ironwork?"—"We import that from England." "Your copper?"—"From England." "Your cordage?"—"We make cordage in the United States, but we import the hemp from Russia; and cordage is 10 per cent higher in America than in England." What is the general result of this comparison? There are shipwrights' wages, 10*s.* a day, seamen's wages, 14*s.* a month higher than your own, timber nearly on an equality; and if there is any inequality, you have the power to redress it; in sails and canvass you have the advantage; in ironwork the advantage—nay, they take their ironwork from you; in copper you have the advantage; in cordage an advantage of 10 per cent. Why, then, should you be afraid to compete with America, either in the building or the navigation of ships? We asked Captain Briggs, "What is the cost of building a 12-years' ship in England?" Every Gentleman present, I presume, knows what a 12-years' ship A number one is. Captain Briggs said, "I calculate that a 12-years' ship can be built and fitted in England as cheaply as a 10-years' ship in America." Still there were points in which the American had an advantage over us, which it was impossible for him to conceal; and let me ask you to consider seriously what are the points in which that advantage consists. We asked Captain Briggs—"Do you make your passage quicker?" "Yes, by some days quicker than an English ship." "How do you account for that?" He said, that the American captains were better paid than the English; that they were paid in a different manner; that the English captains were paid by the month, while the Americans have a commission on the amount of freight; that they have a double interest in quick voyages, because they are paid, not by fixed periods of time, but by the voyage, and because they have a direct interest in keeping the cargo clean and dry. He told us that he never permitted spirits to be drunk on board—that he had introduced the temperance system—that he found all the men willing to conform to it; and in stress of weather, when it was necessary to be on the rigging all night, temperance men were better able to bear it than men who were accustomed to drink spirits. Now, as to those particulars in which the American captain has an advantage, what claim have you for protection. If, indeed, you had to bring your canvass from America, and your copper and your iron, and to pay 10*s.* a day to shipwrights, and 64*s.* a month to seamen, you might have some claim; but you have no right to claim protection on account of the superior skill or conduct of either American captains or men. Nay, consider this: if the effect of your protective system has been to induce your mariners to place a false reliance upon it; if they thought, "We are protected, and therefore we may neglect the precautions which other men take;" then not only is there no pretence for giving protection, but protection is the cause of your inferiority. If you neglect habits of temperance—if you will not pay attention to the stowing of the cargo—if you will not give the captain a direct interest in making a rapid voyage, and in landing his cargo dry and clean; be not surprised that the British or American merchant gives a preference to an American ship; and do not ask the House of Commons to continue to you protection, raising the rate of freight against the manufacturer and the consumer in this country, because you neglect the precautions which ensure the superiority of your rivals. If this evidence be true in these details as to copper and ironwork, as to sails and canvass and cordage, is there any reason to fear competition with that Power which you must admit to be your only formidable competitor? Now, take the case with respect to your own colonies. Can you long resist the claim of Canada? If the freight from New York is so much lower than the freight from Montreal, that the citizen of the United States brings his produce to this country at a cheaper rate—nay, he seduces Canadian produce to come by New

York instead of down the St. Lawrence —how long can we resist the claim of the Canadian to be admitted to equal privileges in British ports with the American? Is it fair? Consider the peculiar position of that country. Can we subject Canadian produce to a disadvantage in British markets unless it can be proved conclusively that for the purpose of national defence we must retain the exclusive possession of this colonial trade? I believe we cannot in justice maintain that principle. Yet to abandon it will be a violation of a fundamental principle of the navigation law. Now, will you consent to enter into the Committee with a previous restriction that shall prevent you from doing that which the interests of Canada, and justice to Canada, require? Would it not be a farce to enter into that Committee with a pledge, which my right hon. Friend will construe into an obligation, that you shall not admit the produce of Canada on the same footing with respect to freight as you admit the produce of America? Upon these grounds I come to the conclusion that it is befitting this House to consider the state of the navigation laws, and with a view to an extensive alteration of them. I shall reserve for separate discussion many—I am loth to call them details, because they are in themselves of the utmost importance; but I wish to confine myself as far as possible to the main question. With respect to the policy of opening the coasting trade, or continuing the restriction, I shall reserve that point at present. With respect to the policy of requiring from a British shipowner that he shall have three-fourths of his crew composed of British seamen, upon that point, also, I should wish to say nothing at present. With regard to the mode of making the alterations which the right hon. Gentleman proposes, I wish to reserve that most important matter for that mature consideration which it fully deserves. That mature consideration cannot be given without a full inquiry into the operation of the principle by which our reciprocity treaties are regulated; but I will throw out one or two observations—they are for consideration only—upon this subject. I think, with my right hon. Friend (Mr. Gladstone), that the first impression is in favour of proceeding by reciprocity treaties; the first impression is, that the Crown should be empowered to grant concessions to any Power which is willing to make equivalent concessions to us. But on the other hand it is deserving of consideration whether or no these reciprocity treaties are not in themselves sources of very great difficulties. Reciprocity treaties are of two kinds—the one comprehending that which is called "the most favoured nation clause;" the other requiring that you shall extend to a certain Power the same privileges which another Power possesses, provided the former will make the same concessions to you which have been made by the latter. This seems simple enough; but when you come to act practically upon those treaties, you find they involve very great difficulties. My right hon. Friend says—and there is some truth in the observation—that there is a difference between the case of differential duties on navigation, and on the import of goods under a tariff. I admit there is; but still it is most difficult to determine whether the concessions which a given country is willing to make, or, in fact, has the power to make, are equivalent to the concessions which have been made by some other country, the commercial demands and commercial produce of which may be of a totally different nature. And with regard to reciprocity treaties, I foresee the risk of great difficulty in the event of war. The power which the Government proposes to retain of reimposing restriction, it will be found very difficult to exercise. The system would be an inversion of the relations between the Crown and Parliament. Under it the House of Commons will be the source of favour — the House of Commons will relax, the Crown will restrain. The House of Commons will give universal privileges, and in the course of four or five years the invidious and difficult duty will be thrown upon the Crown of withdrawing the privileges which the House of Commons has granted. I wish the Ministers to consider the policy of giving a temporary duration to the Act, so that at a certain period the privileges conferred by Act of Parliament would terminate without the Crown being called upon to fulfil the painful duty of reimposing restrictions. Suppose the trade were to be opened for a period of five years; at the end of that period the privileges given would necessarily expire, and every country would have notice that they had the means of averting the re-establishment of restrictions by entering into some arrangement with this country. I would rather see the object effected in that manner than by new reciprocity treaties. I had rather that other countries reserved to themselves the right of independent legislation—that America, for instance, should do what she has to do by voluntary legislation than by treaty. The same difficulty applies to the power which the Government wishes to take of reimposing restrictions. ["Divide!"] I am aware that the argument is exhausted, and feel obliged to the House for the attention which it has afforded me. I advise hon. Members, before they determine to exclude all improvement of these navigation laws, to consider that this great shipping trade and the increase of the commercial marine are dependent, not on the navigation laws, but on the prosperity of commerce. Whatever tends to promote that prosperity tends to increase your commercial marine. You rely on the authority of Mr. Huskisson. You confidently predict that Mr. Huskisson would never have consented to the proposed relaxation of the navigation laws. But Mr. Huskisson dealt with the necessities of the times, and went as far as he safely could in relaxing these laws. Mr. Huskisson may have said at the time that the colonial intercourse and the coasting trade must be preserved intact; but he felt the necessity of making those modifications in the fundamental principles of those laws which were rendered necessary by the change of circumstances and the demands of British interests. Instead of relying upon a particular observation of Mr. Huskisson with regard to the colonial trade or the coasting trade, let us rather advert to the broad principles which he laid down of permanent and universal application. This is an extract from Mr. Huskisson's speech on colonial policy, which contains truths applicable to the altered circumstances of the present time, and applicable to your colonial intercourse and colonial empire at all times and under all circumstances. Mr. Huskisson said—

> "These, it may be objected, are but vague and speculative improvements, which may never be realised. It may be so; but if I am called upon to point out specifically the precise mode and course of operations by which the benefits of this new system are to make their way into the West Indies, I have no hesitation to avow that I can do no such thing. Yet, in making this avowal, let me remind the Committee that in 1813, when, upon the renewal of the East India Company's charter, their monopoly of trade was greatly relaxed, the wisest and most experienced men in that trade could not point out, precisely, what new channels of commerce could be opened with the East Indies. Nay, they denied that any new channels could be explored by the private trader, or that any benefits could accrue to India from the relaxation of the former monopoly. But new channels have been explored, new benefits have been conferred; proving, as the history of all modern commerce proves, that whenever you give a free scope to capital, to industry, to the stirring intelligence and active spirit of adventure which so strongly mark the present times, you are in fact opening new roads to enterprise, and affording new facilities to the interchange of the productions of the different regions of the earth —that interchange, of which the advantages must be reciprocal, and of which the extension to new countries is, perhaps, the surest harbinger of their improvement and civilisation."

These are great truths, the recognition of which is calculated to promote the prosperity of your colonies, to extend their commercial relations, to bring them into contact with European countries. Under such a system the ties which bind to you your colonial dependencies would be strengthened, not by the exercise of power, not by restraint, but by the conviction that England was prepared to abandon that principle of colonial policy hitherto adopted by every country in the world, namely, to make the interests of the colonies subservient to the interests of the mother country.

Lord J. RUSSELL: I find myself relieved from the necessity of troubling the House at any length by the able speech which we have just heard. I am also relieved from that duty by finding that, after hearing in the course of the night various speeches of two hours' duration professedly directed against the measure of the Government, those speeches contain much in relation to other matters—much invective and sarcasm against individuals, but with respect to the proposition before the House, and particularly as regards a defence of the navigation laws, very little, if any, argument has been advanced. The noble Lord who opened the debate this evening entered into his own peculiar line of argument with respect to other measures of free trade. He spoke at some length upon measures not at all affecting the navigation laws; and, according to his view of foreign commerce, all the advantage of free trade goes to foreigners, and none to the people of this country. But the noble Lord's views with respect to foreign commerce are so narrow and confined, that is impossible for me to agree with him upon questions of this nature. Speaking of our trade in America, he said, we took ice from the Americans as some sort of return for our trade; as if our taking ice was a great favour to the Americans, and not a thing done for our own benefit. Why, Sir, ice is an article of luxury with us. [Lord G. BENTINCK: I said rice, not ice.] Well, whether rice or any other article, it is the same. All commerce is a reciprocal benefit to the parties engaged in it. Each party takes the articles which he wants, and does nothing from motives of gratuitous generosity. If it were not for considerations connected with the question of naval defence, no one would stand up and say that it would not be an advantage to admit into our ports the ships of foreign countries, bringing us produce in exchange for our commodities. There can be no doubt that the measure is for the advantage of our commerce; and the question merely turns upon this—whether it will in any way reduce or injure our naval supremacy. The hon. Gentleman has himself expressed a doubt whether these laws were not originally adopted by the Protector Cromwell more in hostility against rival commercial nations, than with a view to benefit the interests of this country. I believe that they were intended, and that they answered their object, to injure those rival nations, but without conferring any real benefit on England. It was not a question of conferring an advantage on ourselves; on the contrary, it was rather an injury to ourselves, but done for the purpose of inflicting a greater injury on our rivals. That object was effected; but I very much doubt whether the Protector Cromwell, if he could hear the question discussed to-night, would think it advisable to keep up these restrictions, in order to prevent the descendants of those Englishmen who went to North America in those times from trading in the most unrestricted manner with the people of this country. But, in fact, in treating this question as a question of naval defence, we must consider those circumstances which would enable foreign Powers to supplant our commercial marine by their commercial marine in the trade of this country. Now, in considering this question, there are evident indications that we have no reason to fear any such competition. In the first place, in respect to the building of ships, in the articles of iron and copper we certainly should have an advantage over every other country. In the next place, in regard to labour, it is most true that English labour is not dear, because the work done by the English labourer is superior to that which is done by the people of other nations. For instance, in regard to the case of wages paid at Bombay—what is the difference to the shipbuilder whether he pays 6*s.* to one English workman for a certain quantity of work, or 1*s.* to each of six workmen at Bombay for the same quantity of work? But it is a fact that the quantity of work done in this country is greater than that which is done by the same number of men in other countries; it cannot, therefore, be said that labour in England is dearer than in other nations. Then, again, with regard to the United States of America, it is proved that their shipbuilding must be as dear as ours, and that the wages of their seamen are higher than the wages of ours. But there are other indications upon this subject. There is a great test as to the power of British ships competing with foreign ships, and successfully too, in what is done in the carrying trade to St. Petersburgh and Hamburgh from various ports of Europe. In that trade British shipowners have no advantage—no navigation laws—no protecting duties, and yet, as I have said, they compete successfully with foreign nations. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire has said that there are a greater number of American ships at Rio than British ships; but I might as well take the case of Hamburgh, where, in the year 1846, there were 995 British ships entered, and only 12 American ships; and so on with regard to other years. But that is no criterion, because this country has the same natural connexion with the trade with Hamburgh as the people of the United States have with Rio. There are, therefore, these two indications—first, with regard to the building and the navigation of British ships; and next, in regard to the state of the actual commerce of the world. But I think there is another and a stronger reason for believing that our naval strength will not be deteriorated, or decline by the repeal of the navigation law, and that is—what I regard as a main consideration—the character of the British people, and the capital which this nation enjoys. I can imagine a country having great capital for carrying on commerce, but with a people having no turn for maritime pursuits, and I can imagine a people having a great turn for maritime pursuits, but the country possessing no capital. Neither of these people can carry on trade with other nations. But where I find a nation possessing at once great capital and great commerce, proverbial for their attachment to and habits for maritime pursuits, I cannot doubt that such a nation, if admitted to free competition with other countries, would always be capable of maintaining a large commercial navy. But what is the consequence as presented to us by experience? It has been said, and I believe most truly said, that Mr. Huskisson abrogated the greater part of the navigation laws so far as regards those countries with which he entered into reciprocity treaties. From all the examination I have been able to make, I am led to the belief that wherever reciprocity treaties have been established, the benefits of the Navigation Act were in effect simply nothing but the bark of the oak whose trunk had entirely disappeared. I have a statement of the trade of this country during the twenty-one years before the year 1823, and the twenty-four years since that period; and I find that in the twenty-one years from 1803 to 1823 that the tonnage of our commercial marine was 339,000 tons, and the number of men employed was 12,000; while during the twenty-four years since 1823, the tonnage was 1,446,000, and the number of men, 67,890. Such was the comparison between the twenty-one years before the reciprocity treaties were formed, and the twenty-four years since the Reciprocity Act was passed. This being the case, I cannot have the smallest doubt that if we abrogate the principal part of the navigation laws, our commercial marine will increase further than it has already done. I cannot doubt that those restrictions being removed, we shall continue to maintain that which I believe to be the foundation of a great and powerful Navy — I mean a strong commercial marine. I quite admit, with my right hon. Friend, that if there was the least reason to suppose that our maritime strength would not be — destroyed, but — diminished by a measure of this nature, that it would be unadvisable for this House to adopt it; but my belief is, as I think we have seen it proved, that every measure tending to relax these restrictions has increased our commercial marine; and I cannot but believe that the tendency of this measure will be likewise further to increase it. An hon. and gallant Admiral who has spoken in this debate, has said, that one of the securities for having our Navy well manned, is being destroyed by the proposal of my right hon. Friend for doing away with the apprenticeship system. I think that no more fallacious mode for keeping up the strength of the Navy ever was invented than that of putting restrictions and imposing a tax on our commercial marine by obliging the shipowner to have a certain number of apprentice boys on board his ship in order to furnish the Navy with seamen. I cannot understand how the shipping interest of this country should come forward to defend a restriction which is so entirely, so grossly, adverse to their interests as not to leave them at liberty to employ either ablebodied seamen, or to adapt their crews to suit the convenience of their ships. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshise (Mr. Disraeli), has made what I consider an attack unworthy of a Gentleman of his position in this House. I allude to that part of the hon. Gentleman's speech in which he laid such blame on certain officers of the Board of Trade, who had made returns to this House and the other House of Parliament, and who had given evidence before the Committee on this subject. I think, considering that those gentlemen furnished the returns which were asked for, whether by Ministers in their several departments, or whether by Members of this House, in the terms in which they were required; and considering that they gave most intelligent evidence upon the inquiry which this House instituted, and also considering that they have no means of defence in this House; I think that an attempt to turn the indignation of this House upon them, and to accuse them of making unfair statements, is conduct unworthy of a Gentleman in the position which the hon. Member holds. And then the reason he assigns for it is— what I think to be a very weak excuse— that these gentlemen of the Board of Trade have a bias towards what is called the principle and doctrines of free trade. I believe it is not possible for the hon. Gentleman, or any one else, to show that they have not stated the facts fairly and truly; but if they were asked their opinions, what could be more natural than that they should declare those opinions openly and honestly? With regard to this general subject, upon which the hon. Gentleman makes an accusation against us, and against the majority of this and the late House of Commons, he might as well say that the University of Cambridge was to be blamed for entertaining a bias towards the Newtonian theory, as that the officers of the Board of Trade are to be blamed because they have a bias towards free commercial principles. There may be very great and very fair differences as to the application of those principles; but I conceive those general principles to be the principles of science upon this subject established now by sixty or seventy years of discussion, and by the opinions of all enlightened men who have considered the question. The hon. Gentleman, however, has accused us of acting with a recklessness of ignorance, because we have proposed to the House to go into Committee on the navigation laws, with a view to ascertain if those laws cannot be amended. I will not now enter into the discussion whether our proposition is the best that could be made; but our proposition is, to act as if the navigation laws had not existed. We propose that all ships of all nations shall be received in our ports in the same manner as British ships, with the exception of the coasting trade and of a certain part of the fisheries; a power being reserved to the Sovereign, by Order in Council, to impose conditions and restrictions upon those nations who impose conditions and restrictions upon us. I think the principle is a right one, and I am quite sure that, so far from being the sign of ignorance which it has been represented by the hon. Gentleman, it is on the other hand a sign of ignorance in him, and in those who act with him, that they still persist in maintaining a theory which is contrary to all acknowledged principles, which is contrary to all the features of the age, and which is contrary to the views taken by men who have studied this subject in the closet—by Mr. Pitt, Mr. Huskisson, and the most enlightened statesmen who have given their attention to the question. I consider that it is the duty of this House, if they mean to lead opinion in this country, to act according to the knowledge of the time; but if they refuse to go into Committee—if they keep up these restrictions because they have been enacted in former times—then to this House will properly apply the phrase of the "recklessness of ignorance;" whilst, on the contrary, by removing these restrictions, you will draw closer the bonds of amity with foreign nations, which are ready to act in bonds of amity and friendship with you; and you will thus give a proof that that you are equal to the destinies that await you.

The House divided on the question, that the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question:—Ayes 294; Noes 177: Majority 117.

List of the Ayes.

Abdy, T. N.
Acland, Sir T. D.
Adair, H. E.
Adair, R. A. S.
Adare, Visct.
Adderley, C. B.
Aglionby, H. A.
Alcock, T.
Anson. hon. Col.
Anson, Visct.
Anstey, T. C.
Armstrong, Sir A.
Armstrong, R. B.
Arundel and Surrey, Earl of
Barkly, H.
Baring, H. B.
Baring, rt. hon. Sir F. T.
Barron, Sir H. W.
Bellew, R. M.
Berkeley, hon. Capt.
Berkeley, hon. H. F.
Bernal, R.
Birch, Sir T. B.
Blackall, S. W.
Blake, M. J.
Bolling, W.
Bouverie, hon. E. P.
Bowring, Dr.
Boyd, J.
Boyle, hon. Col.
Brand, T.
Bright, J.
Brotherton, J.
Brown, W.
Bruce, Lord E.
Bulkeley, Sir R. B. W.
Buller, C.
Bunbury, E. H.
Burke, Sir T. J.
Buxton, Sir E. N.
Callaghan, D.
Campbell, hon. W. F.
Cardwell, E.
Carew, W. H. P.
Carter, J. B.
Caulfeild, J. M.
Cavendish, hon. C. C.
Cavendish, hon. G. H.
Chaplin, W. J.
Charteris, hon. F.
Childers, J. W.
Clay, J.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.
Clifford, H. M.
Cobden, R.
Cochrane, A. D. R. W. B.
Cocks, T. S.
Coke, hon. E. K.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Conyngham, Lord A.
Corbally, M. E.
Courtnay, Lord
Cowan, C.
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Craig, W. G.
Crawford, W. S.
Currie, H.
Currie, R.
Dalrymple, Capt.
Davie, Sir H. R. F.
Denison, J. E.
D'Eyncourt, rt. hon. C. T.
Divett, E.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Drummond, H. H.
Duncan, Visct.
Duncan, G.
Dundas, Adm.
East, Sir J. B.
Ebrington, Visct.
Ellice, rt. hon. E.
Ellice, E.
Elliot, hon. J. E.
Enfield, Visct.
Estcourt, J. B. B.
Evans, J.
Evans, W.
Ewart, W.
Fagan, W.
Fergus, J.
Fitzpatrick, rt. hn. J. W.
Fitzroy, hon. H.
Fitzwilliam, hon. G. W.
Foley, J. H. H.
Fordyce, A. D.
Forster, M.
Fortescue, C.
Fortescue, hon. J. W.
Fox, W. J.
Freestun, Col.
Gibson, rt. hon. T. M.
Gladstone, rt. hon. W. E.
Glyn, G. C.
Grace, O. D. J.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Granger, T. C.
Greene, J.
Greene, T.
Grenfell, C. P.
Grenfell, C. W.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Grey, R. W.
Grosvenor, Lord R.
Guest, Sir J.
Haggitt, F. R.
Hall, Sir B.
Hallyburton, Lord J. F.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Hastie, A.
Hastie, A.
Hawes, B.
Hay, Lord J.
Hayter, W. G.
Headlam, T. E.

Heald, J.
Heneage, G. H. W.
Heneage, E.
Herbert, H. A.
Herbert, rt. hon. S.
Hervey, Lord A.
Heywood, J.
Hindley, C.
Hobhouse, rt. hon. Sir J.
Hobhouse, T. B.
Hodges, T. L.
Hodges, T. T.
Hogg, Sir J. W.
Hollond, R.
Hope, Sir J.
Hope, H. T.
Hope, A.
Horsman, E.
Howard, hon. C. W. G.
Howard, hon. E. G. G.
Howard, Sir R.
Hume, J.
Jervis, Sir J.
Keating, R.
Keogh, W.
Keppel, hon. G. T.
Ker, R.
Kershaw, J.
Kildare, Marq. of
King, hon. P. J. L.
Labouchere, rt. hon. H.
Langston, J. H.
Lascelles, hon. W. S.
Lemon, Sir C.
Lewis, rt. hon. Sir T. F.
Lewis, G. C.
Lincoln, Earl of
Lindsay, hon. Col.
Littleton, hon. E. R.
Loch, J.
Locke, J.
Lockhart, A. E.
Lushington, C.
M'Cullagh, W. T.
M'Gregor, J.
Maher, N. V.
Mahon, The O'Gorman
Maitland, T.
Mangles, R. D.
Marshall, W.
Martin, J.
Martin, C. W.
Martin, S.
Matheson, A.
Matheson, J.
Matheson, Col.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Melgund, Visct.
Milner, W. M. E.
Milnes, R. M.
Milton, Visct.
Mitchell, T. A.
Moffatt, G.
Molesworth, Sir W.
Monsell, W.
Morgan, H. K. G.
Morpeth, Visct.
Morison, Sir W.
Morris, D.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Mowatt, F.
Norreys, Lord
Nugent, Sir P.
O'Brien, J.
O'Connell, M. J.
O'Flaherty, A.
Ogle, S. C. H.
Ord, W.
Oswald, A.
Paget, Lord A.
Paget, Lord C.
Paget, Lord G.
Palmerston, Visct.
Patten, J. W.
Pearson, C.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Perfect, R.
Philips, Sir G. R.
Pilkington, J.
Pugh, D.
Pusey, P.
Raphael, A.
Rawdon, Col.
Reynolds, J.
Ricardo, J. L.
Ricardo, O.
Rich, H.
Robartes, T. J. A.
Roche, E. B.
Romilly, Sir J.
Russell, Lord J.
Russell, hon. E. S.
Russell, F. C. H.
Rutherfurd, A.
Salwey, Col.
Sandars, G.
Scholefield, W.
Scrope, G. P.
Seymour, Lord
Sheil, rt. hon. R. L.
Shelburne, Earl of
Sheridan, R. B.
Simeon, J.
Smith, rt. hon. R. V.
Smith, J. A.
Smith, M. T.
Smythe, hon. G.
Somerville, rt. hn. Sir W.
Spearman, H. J.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Stanton, W. H.
Staunton, Sir G. T.
Stuart, Lord D.
Stuart, Lord J.
Sullivan, M.
Sutton, J. H. M.
Talbot, J. H.
Talfourd, Serj.
Tancred, H. W.
Tenison, E. K.
Tennent, R. J.
Thesiger, Sir F.
Thicknesse, R. A.
Thompson, Col.
Thompson, G.
Thornely, T.
Towneley, C.
Towneley, J.
Townley, R. G.
Traill, G.
Tufnell, H.
Turner, E.
Turner, G. J.
Tynte, Col.
Vane, Lord H.
Verney, Sir H.
Villiers, Visct.
Villiers, hon. C.
Vivian, J. H.
Wakley, T.
Wall, C. B.
Walter, J.
Ward, H. G.
Watkins, Col.
Wellesley, Lord C.
Westenra, hon. J. C.
Westhead, J. P.
Whitmore, T. C.
Willcox, B. M.
Williams, J.
Wilson, J.
Wilson, M.
Wood, rt. hon. Sir C.
Wood, W. P.
Wortley, rt. hon. J. S
Wrightson, W. B.
Wyld, J.
Wyvill, M.
Young, Sir J.

TELLERS.

Hill, Lord M.
Parker, J.

List of the NOES.

Alford, Visct.
Archdall, Capt. M.
Arkwright, G.
Bagot, hon. W.
Bailey, J.
Bailey, J. jun.
Baillie, H. J.
Baines, M. T.
Baldock, E. H.
Bankes, G.
Baring, T.
Barrington, Visct.
Bateson, T.
Benbow, J.
Benett, J.
Bennet, P.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Bentinck, Lord H.
Bernard, Visct.
Blackstone, W. S.
Boldero, H. G.
Bourke, R. S.
Bowles, Adm.
Brackley, Visct.
Bramston, T. W.
Bremridge, R.
Brisco, M.
Broadley, H.
Brooke, Lord
Bruce, C. L. C.
Buck, L. W.
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Bunbury, W. M.
Burghley, Lord
Burrell, Sir C. M.
Burroughes, H. N.
Cabbell, B. B.
Cayley, E. S.
Chichester, Lord J. L.
Christopher, R. A.
Clive, H. B.
Cole, hon. H. A.
Coles, H. B.
Cubitt, W.
Curteis, H. M.
Davies, D. A. S.
Deedes, W.
Dick, Q.
Disraeli, B.
Drax, J. S. W. S. E.
Duke, Sir J.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Dundas, G.
Dunne, F. P.
Du Pre, C. G.
Edwards, H.
Emlyn, Visct.
Farnham, E. B.
Farrer, J.
Fellowes, E.
Floyer, J.
Forbes, W.
Forester, hon. G. C. W.
Fox, S. W. L.
Fuller, A. E.
Galway, Visct.
Goddard, A. L.
Gordon, Adm.
Gore, W. R. O.
Goring, C.
Granby, Marq. of
Grogan, E.
Gwyn, H.
Hale, R. B.
Halford, Sir H.
Hall, Col.
Halsey, T. P.
Hamilton, J. H.
Harris, hon. Capt.
Heathcote, G. J.
Henley, J. W.
Herries, rt. hon. J. C.
Hildyard, R. C.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hill, Lord E.
Hood, Sir A.
Hotham, Lord
Hudson, G.
Humphery, Ald.
Ingestre, Visct.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Johnstone, Sir J.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Jones, Capt.
Kerrison, Sir E.
Knightley, Sir C.
Knox, Col.
Lacy, H. C.
Lascelles, hon. E.
Law, hon. C. E.
Lennox, Lord H. G.
Leslie, C. P.
Lockhart, W.
Lygon, hon. Gen.
Mackenzie, W. F.
Mandeville, Visct.
Manners, Lord G.
Masterman, J.
Maunsell, T. P.
Maxwell, hon. J. P.
Meux, Sir H.
Miles, P. W. S.
Miles, W.

Moore, G. H.
Morgan, O.
Mulgrave, Earl of
Mullings, J. R.
Mure, Col.
Neeld, J.
Neeld, J.
Newport, Visct.
Noel, hon. G. J.
Ossulston, Lord
Packe, C. W.
Palmer, R.
Pattison, J.
Pigot, Sir R.
Plowden, W. H. C.
Powell, Col.
Powlett, Lord W.
Prime, R.
Reid, Col.
Renton, J. C.
Repton, G. W. J.
Richards, R.
Robinson, G. R.
Rolleston, Col.
Rufford, F.
Rushout, Capt.
Sadlier, J.
Scott, hon. F.
Seaham, Visct.
Seymer, H. K.
Shirley, E. J.
Sibthorp, Col.
Smyth, J. G.
Smollett, A.
Somerset, Capt.
Sotheron, T. H. S.
Spooner, R.
Stafford, A.
Stanley, E.
Stephenson, R.
Stuart, H.
Stuart, J.
Talbot, C. R. M.
Taylor, T. E.
Thompson, Ald.
Thornhill, G.
Tollemache, J.
Trollope, Sir J.
Tyrell, Sir J. T.
Verner, Sir W.
Vesey, hon. T.
Villiers, hon. F. W. C.
Vivian, J. E.
Vyse, R. H. R. H.
Waddington, D.
Wadington, H. S.
Walpole, S. H,
Walsh, Sir J. B.
Williams, T. P.
Williamson, Sir H.
Wodehouse, E.
Worcester, Marq. of
Wynn, Sir W. W.

TELLERS.

Beresford, W.
Newdegate, C. N.

House went into Committee; Navigation Acts considered.

House resumed.

Committee to sit again.

House adjourned at a quarter to Three o'clock, till the 15th.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, June 15, 1848.

Minutes.] *Took the Oaths.*—Several Lords.

Public Bills.—1^a Certificates for Killing Hares.

Petitions Presented. From Inverness and Haddington, in favour of, and from Queensferry, against, the Law of Entail (Scotland) Bill.—From Guardians of the Blandford Union, for the Adoption of Measures for the Better Prevention of Vagrancy.—From Members of a Lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Manchester Unity, for the Extension of the Provisions of the Benefit Societies Act to that Order.—From the Board of Directors of the United Ancient Order of Druids, in favour of the Provident Associations Frauds Prevention Bill.—From Ayrshire, and a great number of other Places, against the Marriage (Scotland) Bill, and the Registering Births, &c. (Scotland) Bill.

RAILWAY COMPANIES AND STEAM BOATS.

Lord MONTEAGLE said, there were two or three Railway Bills before their Lordships, in which there were clauses empowering railway companies to become steamboat proprietors. Now, he thought that if such powers were granted to railway companies, the principle of competition would be destroyed. In these cases where such powers were sought, it was represented that certain accommodation and advantages would be given to the public, which they did not at present possess; but their Lordships must recollect that that accommodation would not be derived from the profits of the steamships proposed to be employed, but from the profits obtained upon the railway. Competition, therefore, under such circumstances, would be impossible; and their Lordships had wisely established a Standing Order that no railway company should be empowered to become steamboat proprietors unless a special case were made out. The case to which he now more particularly alluded, was that of the Chester and Holyhead Railway Company. That company had a Bill before Parliament for the purpose of establishing steamboats between Holyhead and Dublin; and he begged to ask the noble Earl the First Lord of the Admiralty, whether Her Majesty's Government were not already fully prepared with steamers of the best quality to carry the mails between Dublin and this country?

The Earl of AUCKLAND said, that, in reply to the question of the noble Lord, he had to state that the Admiralty certainly had provided steam-packets to ply between Holyhead and Dublin for the purpose of carrying the mails; and that unless some arrangements could be made by which that service could be performed as quickly and as surely, he saw very great inconvenience in transferring it to any company. At the same time, he thought that the Board of Admiralty could be relieved from the duty of carrying the Post Office mails; and if they could ensure that the service would be performed as well and as cheaply by contract, the better it would be for the naval service, already hindered by many duties, and the better it would be for the finances of the country, and for the Post Office itself. He thought the question should be approached with very great care and caution, and he would refer his noble Friend to certain papers which would be laid on the table of the House, when he might be enabled to form some opinion on the subject.

Earl GRANVILLE observed, that the Railway Commission had made a report to the House of Commons, in which they called attention to the necessity of having clauses inserted in certain Bills, giving the companies power of investing a definite amount of their capital in steam vessels in connexion with their lines. The report was referred to the Railway Board, and the result was, that a joint report was presented to the House, stating the reasons for and against the project, and recommending that the clauses should be allowed and inserted with certain limitations; and this report it was intended to act upon.

The EARL of RODEN said, he agreed with the noble Earl that great caution should be exercised before the Legislature came to any decision on the subject of Post-office communication. He could bear full testimony to the exertions of the Admiralty to do the best that could be done for this service. It was a matter of the greatest importance that the two capitals should be brought as near to each other as it was possible to do. At present, a great step had been made to accomplish that object; and in proof of it, he could state that he left Dublin the other morning at half-past seven o'clock, and was in London at half-past ten o'clock that night.

THE RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS.

LORD REDESDALE, in pursuance of a notice on the Votes, rose to "ask the Lord President respecting the duties which the Railway Commissioners are expected to perform, and the position in which they are considered to stand in relation to Her Majesty's Government?" He did so for the purpose of bringing under their Lordships' notice the relations between the Railway Commissioners and the Government. The Board charged with the superintendence of railways was so inactive, that its existence was hardly ever thought of even by those more conversant with the subject. In doing so he would shortly recall to their recollection the circumstances under which the Board was constituted. In 1844, when the railway question rose into great importance, it became evident to all that there would be in the ensuing Session such a mass of Bills before the Legislature, many of them referring to the same districts, that unless some guidance were given to the Committees, it was very probable the reports would be imperfectly considered. It was resolved accordingly, that the Board of Trade should be called on to investigate and report upon the various projects in the ensuing year. The noble Earl (the Earl of Dalhousie) then Vice-President of the Board of Trade, had given much of his attention to that most important subject, and issued a mass of information in the reports from the Board, which conferred on him and those who acted with him the greatest possible credit. He believed there was hardly a man in the country who did not at that time conceive it was the intention of Government to give some degree of support to the reports proceeding from their own Board. No disappointment would have been felt by any one if such had been the case, and the greatest possible good would have been effected with respect to the railway interest throughout the country. But it was soon seen the Government was not disposed to give support to the recommendation of the Board of Trade—that the Committees of the House were to have more weight than the reports—and that in every instance where the Committees upset the reports, their decisions were retained without any further investigation. So sensible were the House of Commons of the mischief of this course, and so numerous were the complaints made in consequence, that a Commission was appointed to inquire into the important question of the difference of the gauges. This Commission reported to the House that the Board of Trade could not fully concur with their recommendations. The Board of Trade then reported on the subject to the House, and the Government at last became aware of the importance of taking up the question. They took up the report of the Board of Trade, and resolutions were moved in both Houses, on which a Bill was introduced by Government as a public measure, regulating the various matters connected with railways. It was on this occasion only that some degree of support had been given by the Government to their own Board. It seemed desirable, in order to carry out the objects of the Legislature, that a separate Board should be appointed for the performance of these new duties, and that it should not rest as heretofore on a public department which had other and equally important duties to discharge. By Act of Parliament the Railway Commission was therefore appointed as a separate and independent body, with duties specially set forth and defined in that Act. They were required to report specially on any matter connected with railways which might be referred to them, and to report as well on any manner connected with railways which would be at all likely to affect the public interests. If no such reports were issued, it was evident that the Board must be liable to an accusation of dereliction of duty. But then it was to be recollected that Government had never shown any disposition to support these reports, and any person would naturally feel reluctant to give a decision likely to be upset by the decision of a Committee of either House of Parliament. In the present Session many questions had arisen of the greatest importance, not only to the railway interest but to the public, such as the Gauge Bill, and the amalgamation of railways, with respect to which the Railway Board ought to have taken some decided steps, but in which they had never interfered at all. Surely it was the duty of the Commissioners to have reported on these and such important matters to Parliament. It would seem, however, that this Board stood in a different position from any other Board connected with Her Majesty's Government or the public service. What would be thought, for example, if the Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests brought a Bill into the House on a subject connected with his department, in which he received no support whatever from the Government to which he belonged? It was evident the public would soon cease to respect his office. There might be one reason why the reports of the Board had never received much confidence, and that might be that they had never shown themselves to be worth much with respect to the important matters coming under their charge. Soon after the formation of the Board they introduced a Bill, of which (as it had never come up to their Lordships) he would only say that it seemed to have contained many most useful provisions; but from the small amount of support it received, it was finally allowed to drop, without any effort being even made by the Government to assist the measure of their own Board. It was desirable that the public should know in what position this Board really stood, and whether they were really intended to have any charge of the railway system or not. If the question were answered in the negative, it must appear that the Board were utterly useless; if in the affirmative, then it was worth ascertaining if the reports they made as Government officers were still to be disregarded. As matters stood at present, the decision of any Committee, put forth, perhaps, by a majority of one, would have more weight than all their recommendations; and this was a state of things, as he conceived, neither creditable to the Government nor to the Railway Board itself. He wished to know what duties were expected from this Board, and what support Government intended to give it?

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE said, the question of the noble Lord raised two points—the first, whether it was expedient that there should be a Board to take charge of railway projects, and institute inquiries respecting them?—the second, what was the use of the Board which now existed? In reply to the first, he had to state that he certainly thought it desirable such a body should be constituted; and that although there had been alterations in the administration of the Board, consequent on the person who had been at the head of it ceasing to exercise his functions, in which the principle of economy had determined the Government not to fill that post, the Board nevertheless existed with exactly the same functions, and under precisely the same regulations, as under previous Governments. The functions of that Board were of very great importance, and they were proceeding from day to day, as they would continue to proceed, to the benefit of the public, and to the great assistance of the Parliament and of the Government. There were no functions which it ever had exercised before that it did not exercise. The points to which the attention of the Board was constantly referred, were various and important. They were, the opening of railways in particular; inquiring into their safety for the public; inquiring into the accidents which unfortunately occur from time to time; the regulation of cheap trains; the regulation of fares; the by-laws of the several companies; all miscellaneous matters relating to railways; references under public Acts of Parliament; disputes between company and company; references under the Standing Orders; the special duty of making reports on the important colonial railways from time to time submitted to them; and other matters of equal consequence. To give an idea of the extent of their labours, he might state that 780 lines had been inspected and reported on by the Board last year, and that a greater number would undergo the same process this year. In every case where accidents occurred, inquiries had been instituted, and in twenty-two cases special reports had been made by the engineers acting under their authority, in which they had made suggestions, which, in most instances, if not all, had been, he was happy to state, readily adopted by the various companies. The number of special clauses they had inserted in Acts of Parliament last year were eighty, on fifty different subjects. It could not be said, then, that this Board was not discharging useful and important duties, and that it was not in the full exercise of those functions with which Parliament had entrusted it, and which were necessary for the public safety. He was not prepared to say that Government should consider itself bound in every case to shut its ears to the recommendations of Parliament, merely because a public department took an opposite view of any particular case; but if the noble Lord asked him whether at any time it might be likely that greater powers would be conferred on the Board, he confessed he was not prepared to answer him. This he would say, however, that the Government did not think they had yet arrived at that time at a stage of proceedings when they would be justified in proposing any such increase, while he was not inclined to state that in his opinion the time might not come when more powers would be required. At present the President and Vice-President of the Board of Trade were giving their attention to the various matters connected with railways, with the most efficient assistance of able and experienced paid officers.

Lord REDESDALE said, the noble Marquess seemed to think that great weight had been given to the reports which had issued from the Railway Board; but he (Lord Redesdale) was afraid no weight had been given to them at all, inasmuch as he did not know of any one case in which those reports had been fully carried out and acted upon. What he wanted to ascertain was this: would the Board, after it had come to any decision on a question, and having the opportunity of hearing the opinions adverse to it urged in Parliament, in the presence of the heads of the Board, persist in that decision if their views remained unaltered, and if they thought it necessary for the public service; and would the Government assist and support them in Parliament? It would appear, from what had taken place, that the Railway Board had not the courage to support their own opinions.

Earl GRANVILLE said, it appeared to him that the noble Lord had made some confusion between the Board of Trade and the Railway Commission. With respect te the recommendations of the latter body, he could assure the noble Lord that in every single case they had been attended to and acted upon. The Board might no doubt be made still more useful; but no one could admit for one moment that it was useless, as long as it was composed of its present Members, exercising the same powers. If the noble Lord thought that superintendence in railways should be abolished, his objections might have some value; but he (Earl Granville) could not approve of any proposition for the introduction of persons of a lower grade into the Board.

Lord REDESDALE: What he desired, was to raise the position of the Railway Department of the Board of Trade. The Board had made some very good reports, and gave some very clear and decided opinions. He could not say so much for the report upon the last subject referred to their consideration. The Board of Trade ought not to have left Parliament to decide upon the gauge question without the expression of some decided opinion. Upon that question, which was one of public interest, Parliament had been left to decide in what manner private interest might dictate.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, June 15, 1848.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—1° Borough Elections (No. 2). 2° Administration of Criminal Justice.

Reported.—Commons Inclosure.

3° Administration of Justice (No. 1); Administration of Justice (No. 2); Protection of Justices from Vexatious Actions.

Petitions Presented. By Mr. W. J. Fox, and other Hon. Members, from a Number of Places, for an Extension of the Elective Franchise.—By Mr. Bankes, from several of the Clergy and Laity of the Church of England, for an Alteration of the Law respecting Bishops.—By Mr. Broadley, from the Congregation of Wesleyan Methodists in the Village of North Cave, for a Better Observance of the Lord's Day.—By Mr. Duncan, from Dundee, in favour of the Places of Worship Sites (Scotland) Bill.—By Mr. Lushington, from the Committee of the British Anti-State Church Association, for a Withdrawal of the Regium Donum Grant.—By Lord George Bentinck, from Merchants, Planters, and Others, of Ceylon, in favour of Measures of Relief for that Island.—By Captain Fordyce, from Aberdeen, for Inquiry into the Excise Laws.—From Electors of Paisley, against any Alteration of the Sugar Duty.—By Mr. Sharman Crawford, from Inhabitants of Smallbridge (Lancaster), in favour of Secular Education.—By Mr. Henry Stuart, from Bedford, for Encouragement to Schools in Connexion with the Church Education Society (Ireland).—By Mr. Henry Berkeley, from Benjamin Webster, Lessee and Manager of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, for Restricting the Number of Foreign Theatres in the Metropolis.—By Mr. Grogan, from Members of the Committee of the Dublin Mercantile Guardian Association, for Alteration of the Imprisonment for Debt (Ireland) Bill.—By Mr. Elliot, from Commissioners of Supply of the County of Roxburgh, for Alteration of the Lunatic Asylums (Scotland) Bill.—By Sir G. Philips, from Guardians of the Poor of the Poole Union (Dorset), for Alteration of the Law respecting Mendicancy.—By Mr. Ker Seymer, from Lyme Regis, against a Repeal of the Navigation Laws.—By Mr. Hume, from the Marquess of Westmeath, praying the House to afford Relief to the Dublin Post Office.—By

Mr. Henry Drummond, from the Town Council of Godalming (Surrey), for Alteration of, and by Sir R. H. Inglis, from Inhabitants of the Parish of St. George the Martyr, Queen Square, in favour of, the Public Health Bill.—By Lord G. Bentinck, from the Parish of Kilmaurs, Ayrshire, against the Registering Births, &c. (Scotland) Bill (1847); and Marriage (Scotland) Bill (1847).—By Mr. Ewart, from Members of London Mechanics' Institution, for Alteration of the Scientific Societies Bill.

THE SPANISH AMBASSADOR.

Mr. G. BANKES, not seeing the noble Lord the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in his place, would ask the noble Lord whether the departure of the Spanish Ambassador originated from his dismissal by the Government of Her Britannic Majesty, or whether it was in consequence of an order of recall by his own Government, or from any other circumstance; whether any correspondence would be laid on the Table of the House with regard to his departure; and whether Her Majesty's Government would lay any further correspondence before the House relative to the dismissal of the British Minister from Madrid?

Lord J. RUSSELL: The dismissal of the Spanish Ambassador from the Court of Her Britannic Majesty has resulted from a correspondence which has passed between my noble Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Spanish Minister, and has not been the result of any recall from his own Government. My noble Friend will lay upon the table of the House additional papers, by command of Her Majesty; and the papers in question will relate to the dismissal of Sir H. Bulwer, as well as to the dismissal of the Spanish Minister.

LEICESTER BOROUGH WRIT.

Lord J. RUSSELL, in reference to the notice given by the hon. Member for Northamptonshire of a Motion for the issue of a new writ for the borough of Leicester, appealed to the hon. Member whether he would proceed with his Motion after the notice which had been given by the hon. Baronet opposite, comprising all the cases of vacant boroughs?

Mr. STAFFORD was not surprised at the appeal made to him by the noble Lord, after the unconstitutional course which had been pursued, and the inconveniences it had produced—inconveniences which had now become insufferable. He could not, after the plan which from the outset he had expressed himself determined to pursue, accede to the request. He felt bound to persevere with the Motion, in the present uncertainty of the Bill brought in by the hon. Baronet the Member for Flint passing. Since November last eighteen Acts of Parliament had been passed. Of these four were Money Acts; three were Acts for the amendment or elucidation of statutes already in existence; two were the famous Coercion Acts; one was the Superannuation Fund Act; another had reference to a Commission appointed to superintend public works in Ireland; another gave additional time for the construction of certain railways; another sanctioned certain reforms with respect to the Court of Chancery; and the last was the celebrated enactment for the suspension of the constitution of New Zealand. That was all that they had done since the month of November last. They were now in the month of June, and he could not consent to wave his present Motion until the Bill of the hon. Baronet the Member for Flint should be disposed of, for he did not think that there was any immediate prospect of that measure coming under the consideration of the House. Indeed it was evident that a very considerable period must elapse before it could be taken into consideration, for no less than forty-eight Bills had precedence of it. It was by no means creditable to that House that they should have to make the admission that during that prolonged Session nothing had as yet been done to check corruption and repress the practice of bribery at elections beyond the clumsy and coarse device of suspending writs—an expedient which was had recourse to without regard to the size of the constituencies, and irrespectively of the merits of each particular case. No remedial measure was dreamt of until the Bill of a private Member (the Horsham Election Bill) found its way to the table of the House, in company with 48 others, in the middle of the month of June. And it was in reference to a system of legislation so tardy and so unmethodic, that he was called upon to postpone his Motion. He could not accede to any such application. The effect of the system pursued by that House, with reference to the boroughs whose writs were now in abeyance, would be to silence all complaints for the future, and foster corruption rather than to discourage it. Let them look to what had happened in the boroughs of Bewdley and Kinsale. He had not seen the reports which had emanated from Committees of that House with respect to those boroughs, and, therefore, had no authority but hearsay on which to rely; but this he knew, that it was very generally understood that the Gentleman who had proposed his noble Friend the Member for the former borough, gave a great entertainment to the constituency at the last election, and that he walked from that entertainment to the polling place. That certainly looked very like treating, but nevertheless there was no petition from Bewdley; and the reason there was not was simply this, that the party in Bewdley who were prejudiced by the "treating" which prevailed at the last election, had sufficient common sense to see that they would not get their own man by petitioning, but that all that would come of a petition would be, that the writ would be suspended, and Bewdley be left without a representative at all. In the case of Kinsale, too, the impression was strong, and of very general prevalence, that corruption and bribery had been practised at the last election. It was said that a certain body of worthy and independent electors, who had not distinguished themselves by any remarkable purity at previous elections, had taken shipping for the new world, and were waiting for the wind, when they heard that a new election was going on. The story went, that on receiving that information, they left their wives and children, disembarked, returned to Kinsale to give one more vote in their country's cause, and having done so, went back to the vessel richer if not better men. He was very far from insinuating that the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies had any cognisance of these proceedings, or gave them his sanction; but certain it was, that common report alleged most positively that they had occurred. No petition, however, was presented, the people of Kinsale being prudently of opinion that it was better to submit to the suspicion of a little corruption than undergo the certain penalty of disfranchisement. The House used to pursue a more judicious and a more equitable course in former years. In the year 1831, a petition was presented alleging that gross bribery, corruption, and treating prevailed in the borough of Liverpool. The writ was in that case suspended, but it was suspended for a limited period, the duration of which was defined. The Committee reported on the 28th of March, 1831; the writ was suspended on the 16th April until the 30th of that month; and on the 30th a new writ was issued. A similar course was pursued in the cases of Carrickfergus, Warwick, and Stafford. The writ in those cases was suspended for a specified period, and at the expiration of that period either the punishment of temporary disfranchisement was prolonged, or a new writ was issued. That was an intelligible proceeding; but to advise that certain boroughs should be indefinitely disfranchised until a certain Bill was passed, was to act without justice and without precedent. But the case was still worse, still more intolerable, when they found that the House of Commons used no exertion whatever to pass the Bill, on the passing of which the issuing of the writs was made to depend. He would be no party to such a proceeding; and the less so when he found that the Government were resolved that a Bill of their own on the subject of these borough elections should depend on and go *pari passu* with the measure introduced by a private Member of that House. He was free to admit that if the writ ought to be suspended in any case, it ought to be supended in the case of Leicester; but he did not see why bribery, which was a statutable offence, should be treated in a different manner from any other statutable offence. And yet it was so, for in the case of bribery the innocent were subjected to the penalty as well as those who, being alone guilty, were alone legally punishable. The population of Leicester was 63,000. At the last election 3,000 electors voted. There were 600 freemen in the town, and although it was proved that some of them had been bribed, it was only fair to admit that the evidence went to show that some of them voted without being bribed, and that others did not vote at all. The majority in favour of Mr. Gardiner was 170, so that the race was close enough between those who held the opinions of the hon. Member for Montrose and those who ventured to think that the institutions of the country were even now worth preserving. But what he wished especially to direct attention to was, that it was distinctly proved before the Committee that all the bribes were distributed at a certain building known as the Reform-office. And who was it gave them out? Why, Mr. Staines, who was a man who kept a public-house known by the imposing designation of "The Rights of the People." It was unquestionable that great distress at prevailed in that borough. The poor-rate amounted to as large a sum as 13*s.* in the pound, and there was in certain quarters a strong feeling of dissatisfaction with the institutions of the country. He could not bring himself to believe that it was wise or just to keep such a community, at such a period, without any representation in that House. Regard being had to all the circumstances of the case, he was of opinion that he should best discharge his duty by persisting in his determination to take the sense of House on the following resolution:—

"That Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a New Writ for the electing of two Burgesses to serve in this present Parliament for the borough of Leicester, in the room of Sir Joshua Walmsley, and Richard Gardiner, Esq., whose Election has been determined to be void."

MR. FREWEN opposed the Motion. The hon. Member who brought it forward had stated that he had no connexion with the town of Leicester, and the fact was no doubt as he stated. Had it been otherwise, in all probability he would not have submitted any such Motion. The House had yet to take into consideration the report of the Committee presented only a few days since, in which it was distinctly asserted that many cases of bribery had occurred in that borough. The question for the House was, whether they could entertain that report, and act as the Committee recommended or not. His family had been for some years connected with Leicester county and town, and he did not hesitate to say that it was one of the most corrupt places in the kingdom. In the year 1826 no less a sum than 66,000*l.* was expended by three candidates, and bribery to quite as large an extent was practised on occasions of many previous elections. When he was very reluctantly induced, in the year 1839, to offer himself as a candidate for Leicester, he told his committee that he had rather lose the election altogether than that there should be a single case of bribery on his account. A certain number of freemen went and tendered their votes to his committee at a certain price, just as they had done on a recent occasion, the only difference being that they were now offered at the rate of 17*s.* 6*d.* a head, whereas they were offered to his committee at so high a price as 1*l.* a head. This had gone on for such a length of time that it was quite right that a stop should be put to it at last. He should vote against the issuing of a new writ.

MR. SEYMER, as Chairman of the Select Committee to which had been referred the petition in the case of the Leicester election, recommended the House to refrain from issuing a new writ until the evidence taken before the Committee was in the hands of all the Members. It was not fair to the Committee not to pursue such a course. If much delay, however, should occur in the progress of the Bill introduced by the hon. Baronet the Member for the Flint Boroughs, he should at a future day vote for the issue of a new writ, for he did not think it right that the writ should be kept in abeyance for a definite period. As to the freemen of Leicester, he might be permitted to say that it did not appear to the Committee that a recommendation to disfranchise them would meet the justice of the case. It was true that there were indications of corruption amongst some of them, but there were similar indications amongst the ten-pounders. Orders were given on shopkeepers for hats and other articles of costume, and it appeared that an extensive system of treating prevailed. In short, the case presented features which induced the Committee to believe that it was not expedient that precisely the same course should be adopted with respect to Leicester as had been adopted in the case of Great Yarmouth.

SIR J. PAKINGTON trusted his hon. Friend the Member for North Northamptonshire would not press his Motion to a division.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL was of opinion that the hon. Member for North Northamptonshire would have done far better for the interests of those whom he represented, had he acquiesced in the proposal which he had submitted to him. He would then have spared the House much time expended in a rather profitless discussion. The statement made by the hon. Member who was Chairman of the Committee appointed to try the petition in the case of the Leicester election, and the wish which that hon. Gentleman expressed that the writ should not be issued until the evidence taken before that Committee should be in the hands of the Members, met his entire approbation, and he had no doubt that they would also command the approval of the House. He would take leave, however, to say, that so far from the suspension of writs being an unusual and unconstitutional proceeding, it was a proceeding in justification of which numerous precedents might be cited. So far back as a few years after the Revolution, that was to say in the years 1697 and 1698, in cases where there were reports presented from Committees of the whole House, that corruption or corrupt practices prevailed in any borough, the House proceeded to suspend the writs. That had occurred in the case of Aldborough, when the writ was suspended from December 1696, to December, 1697, being one entire year; and it was only on the presentation of a petition from all the inhabitants, promising that the elections should be conducted with greater purity for the future, that the House was induced to consent to the issue of a new writ. A similar occurrence had taken place in the cases of Bishop's Castle and other boroughs in the beginning of the reign of Queen Anne; and many instances were recorded in the reigns of George I., George II., and George III. So well confirmed was the practice, as well by Act of Parliament as by precedent, that in the year 1820, he being an independent Member of that House, finding that there were many boroughs with respect to which inquiries were pending, brought in a Bill to provide that the writs should be suspended for those boroughs during the period of the then approaching dissolution, and that the constituencies should not proceed to the election of any Members until an opportunity should be afforded to the new Parliament to inquire into the charges alleged against such boroughs. Lord Castlereagh, who at that time possessed great influence in the House, and could have stopped the Bill at any moment, so far from resisting it, consented to its introduction. The Bill was accordingly introduced, and he believed it received the consent of both Houses of Parliament. It was clear, therefore, that it was incorrect to state that it was an uncommon, unprecedented, or unconstitutional proceeding to suspend, under certain circumstances, the writs for certain boroughs. With respect to the remedial measure that had been proposed, he did not hesitate to admit that it was highly desirable that the decision of the House should be taken as soon as possible, as to whether they approved or disapproved of the principle of the Bill that had been introduced by the hon. Baronet the Member for the Flint boroughs. If the House should think fit to approve of the principle of that Bill, the sense of the majority ought to prevail, and the Bill ought to be carried forward without delay. If the House did not approve of the principle of that Bill, he would then go on with the Bill with respect to the borough of Horsham, and see whether its provisions might not be enlarged. But certainly the House ought to declare its opinion on the subject one way or another. The plan of hon. Members opposite appeared to be to throw every possible obstruction in the way of the Bill of the hon. Member for Flint, and then to make the tardy progress of the measure an excuse for bringing forward such Motions as the present. The proceeding, however, was one to which it was to be hoped the House would not extend its sanction. They ought to decide on the earliest opportunity, whether or not they would proceed with the Bill.

After some further debate,

The House divided:—Ayes 6; Noes 129: Majority 123.

List of the AYES.

Baldock, E. H.
Benbow, J.
Hudson, G.
O'Connor, F.
Sibthorp, Col.
Sidney, Ald.

TELLERS.

Stafford, A.
Goring, C.

List of the NOES.

Adair, H. E.
Adair, R. A. S.
Aglionby, H. A.
Anson, hon. Col.
Armstrong, R. B.
Bellew, R. M.
Benett, J.
Bernal, R.
Birch, Sir T. B.
Bowring, Dr.
Boyd, J.
Boyle, hon. Col.
Bramston, T. W.
Brotherton, J.
Cardwell, E.
Carew, W. H. P.
Chaplin, W. J.
Christy, S.
Clay, J.
Clifford, H. M.
Cobden, R.
Cochrane, A. D. R.W.B.
Cocks, T. S.
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Crawford, W. S.
Damer, hon. Col.
Davie, Sir H. R. F.
Dawson, hon. T. V.
D'Eyncourt, rt. hn. C.T.
Divett, E.
Dodd, G.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Duncan, G.
Dundas, Adm.
Edwards, H.
Elliot, hon. J. E.
Estcourt, J. B. B.
Evans, J.
Fordyce, A. D.
Fox, W. J.
Freestun, Col.
Frewen, C. H.
Fuller, A. E.
Glyn, G. C.
Grace, O. D. J.
Granger, T. C.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Grey, R. W.
Guest, Sir J.
Hallyburton, Lord J. F.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Hastie, A.
Hayter, W. G.
Headlam, T. E.
Heathcote, G. J.
Henry, A.
Herbert, H. A.
Hill, Lord M.
Hood, Sir A.
Howard, hon. C. W. G.
Hume, J.
Jervis, Sir J.
King, hon. P. J. L.
Lascelles, hon. W. S.
Lewis, G. C.
Lincoln, Earl of
Lushington, C.
Macnaghten, Sir E.
M'Gregor, J.
Mangles, R. D.
Martin, J.
Matheson, Col.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Miles, W.
Milner, W. M E.
Moffatt, G.
Morgan, H. K. G.
Morpeth, Visct.
Mowatt, F.
Mulgrave, Earl of
Norreys, Lord
O'Brien, J.

O'Connell, M. J.
Ogle, S. C. H.
Pakington, Sir J.
Palmer, R.
Parker, J.
Pattison, J.
Pearson, C.
Pechell, Capt.
Pendarves, E. W. W.
Perfect, R.
Pinney, W.
Plowden, W. H. C.
Pugh, D.
Raphael, A.
Ricardo, O.
Rich, H.
Richards, R.
Robartes, T. J. A.
Roche, E. B.
Romilly, Sir J.
Russell, Lord J.
Salwey, Col.
Scholefield, W.
Smith, rt. hon. R. V.
Smith, M. T.
Spooner, R.
Strickland, Sir G.
Stuart, Lord D.
Stuart, H.
Sullivan, M.
Talfourd, Serj.
Thompson, Col.
Thornely, T.
Tollemache, hon. F. J.
Townshend, Capt.
Tufnell, H.
Turner, E.
Tynte, Col.
Verney, Sir H.
Vivian, J. H.
Ward, H. G.
Watkins, Col.
Westhead, J. P.
Wilson, J.
Wood, W. P.
Wrightson, W. B.
Wyvill, M.

TELLERS.

Seymer, H. K.
Trollope, Sir J.

HEALTH OF TOWNS BILL.

Order of the Day for the further consideration of the Report on the Health of Towns Bill read,

The EARL of LINCOLN said, it would be in the recollection of the House, that when the Bill was in Committee, he gave notice that it was his intention to move Amendments on the third and fourth clauses, and it was suggested that he should postpone them till the bringing up of the report. He begged now to state the reasons which had influenced him in abandoning that intention, and in making no opposition to the constitution of the Board which the noble Lord now proposed. He (Lord Lincoln) had always objected to the board as originally constructed, because he thought that not only its probable but its necessary tendency would be to extend the central authority to the details of local government in a greater degree than would be either advisable or palatable to the country at large. At the same time, he had expressed a strong opinion that it was necessary there should be a certain amount of central authority exercised by means of inspection, with a view to enforce activity where negligence existed, and to give advice where knowledge was wanting, so as to facilitate the operations which it was the intention of the Bill to effect. If the Bill had stood as when it was originally introduced, the objections he brought against that part of it would still have existed; and certainly, looking to the immense alterations which had been introduced into the Bill by the noble Lord on the various occasions on which it had been before the Committee, he thought that the noble Lord would himself now entirely agree with him that a central board would have been unnecessary, and that the duties might have devolved, without any additional aid, on some of the existing offices of Government, if those duties had been confined to a slight supervision. But since he gave the notice to which he had referred, there had been an entire reconstruction of the machinery of the Bill, by a few simple alterations, which had wisely, as he thought, been adopted by the noble Lord—so that it was not only desirable, but absolutely necessary, that there should be a new office to superintend the operation of the Bill, because, looking to the precedent of the Enclosure Act, which was passed three or four years back, he was satisfied that it would now be impossible either for the Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests, or any other existing officer of Government, to carry into effect the provisions of the Bill, particularly as regarded the preliminary inquiries which were necessary in certain cases. The ground had, therefore, been completely cut from under his feet in regard to the Amendments he had intended to propose. He agreed with the noble Lord in the alterations he had made, with a single exception. The noble Lord, in consenting to the Amendments which had been proposed by the hon. Member for Oxfordshire, had undoubtedly, in one respect, gone greatly beyond his (Lord Lincoln's) views as to the limitation of central authority. He did regret that the noble Lord had consented to abandon the power of supervision by central authority, in the way of local inspection; for, looking to the experience they had had of the exercise of this power in regard to gaols, factories, and schools, he considered that great benefit had resulted from it; and he could not help thinking that when (as he had no doubt would be the case with a measure of so comprehensive a character) the noble Lord came to Parliament to get it amended, he would find that experience had proved that the power of inspection should not have been abandoned. With this exception, he highly approved of the other alterations which the noble Lord had adopted, and would not therefore press his intended Amendments.

Several verbal Amendments having been agreed to,

CAPTAIN PECHELL moved an Amendment to strike out all that part of the Bill which gave owners and ratepayers more than one vote each. He had no objection to give owners an additional vote where they were occupiers also. The effect of the proposed system of plurality of votes would be, that the richer classes or the manufacturers would create some monster nuisance, and then by their twelve votes they would overpower and outvote the poorer classes.

Mr. HUME thought it extremely desirable to make this Bill as popular as possible; but if the scale of voting adopted by the new poor-law were retained as proposed, great discontent would be caused. One great cause of the dislike with which the new poor-law was regarded in Middlesex arose from whole streets being swamped by the plurality of votes enjoyed by some of the owners of property. He hoped the Government would consent to give every individual ratepayer one vote only.

Viscount MORPETH reminded the House that this point had been very fully argued and considered in Committee, and the House had decided by a very large majority that the present mode of rating should be retained. Apart from the reasons which might be urged in favour of the mode of voting provided by the Bill, he did not think it would be respectful to the House to cancel their former decision. Property was very largely dealt with by the Bill, and it therefore gave to owners and occupiers of property that protection for their proportionate interests which the plurality of votes was intended to confer.

Mr. S. CRAWFORD would strongly support the Amendment of the hon. and gallant Member for Brighton (Captain Pechell.

The House divided on the question that the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Bill:—Ayes 46; Noes 18: Majority 28.

List of the Ayes.

Anson, hon. Col.
Armstrong, R. B.
Arundel and Surrey, Earl of
Baines, M. T.
Bellew, R. M.
Bernal, R.
Christy, S.
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Cubitt, W.
Divett, E.
Drummond, H.
Elliot, hon. J. E.
Forster, M.
Grey, R. W.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Hawes, B.
Hay, Lord J.
Hayter, W. G.
Henley, J. W.
Hobhouse, rt. hon. Sir J.
Howard, hon. C. W. G.
Jervis, Sir J.
Labouchere, rt. hon. H.
Lacy, H. C.
Lascelles, hon. W. S.
Lewis, G. C.
Mackinnon, W. A.
Maher, N. V.
Masterman, J.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Mitchell, T. A.
Morpeth, Visct.
Newdegate, C. N.
O'Brien, J.
Parker, J.
Raphael, A.
Romilly, Sir J.
Russell, Lord J.
Russell, F. C. H.
Sheil, rt. hon. R. L.
Somerville, rt. hon. Sir W.
Spooner, R.
Turner, E.
Turner, G. J.
Wood, rt. hn. Sir C.
Wyld, J.

TELLERS.
Tufnell, H.
Hill, Lord M.

List of the Noes.

Aglionby, H. A.
Clay, J.
Clay, Sir W.
Cobden, R.
Crawford, W. S.
D'Eyncourt, rt. hon. C.
Evans, J.
Fox, W. J.
Hall, Sir B.
Henry, A.
Pearson, C.
Perfect, R.
Salwey, Col.
Scholefield, W.
Stuart, Lord D.
Thompson, Col.
Thornely, T.
Urquhart, D.

TELLERS.
Hume, J.
Pechell, Capt.

Report agreed to.

BOROUGH ELECTIONS BILL.

On the question that the Speaker leave the chair,

Colonel SIBTHORP said, his objections to the measure were not in the slightest degree of a personal kind, for he could tell the noble Lord the Prime Minister, and the right hon. Gentleman, that he wished all the inquiry which that Bill was calculated to give. He objected, however, to such a measure as this being brought in by a private individual under the sanction of the noble Lord the Prime Minister of the country, and yet who was not there personally to give his measure his support. "Conscience," it was said, "makes cowards of us all." Where, he asked, was the noble Lord? Was there any fear felt as to an inquiry into Horsham? Where was the Attorney General? Did his conscience smite him when he heard the name of Horsham mentioned, and had he fled from the discussion? The hon. Mover of the Bill (Sir John Hanmer) had formerly sat on that—the Opposition—side of the House; but now he had, cameleon-like, changed colour; but he once represented a place notorious for its corruption; and those, he said, who sat for dirty places should not seek to purify those more pure than themselves. As to this Bill it was one grossly partial in its operation; he complained of it on that account as well as of its inquisitorial character; for it went beyond the threshold of that which an Englishman once considered as his castle—a man's own home. By this Bill a man was called to betray the confidence reposed in him by his friend, and to open his very book to the examination of the Commissioners; and by whom were the Commissioners to be appointed? In point of fact, by the Government, although nominally by the Bill. But should not an inquiry like this be impartial? What, he asked, became of the secret service money? What was the mode of distributing the 36,000*l.*? How much of that was expended in bribery by both Governments? Let the noble Lord and the Chancellor of the Exchequer come to that table, and if there were to be a searching inquiry, he would say let the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the persons connected with the Treasury state that neither directly nor indirectly was there any money expended in the city of London or elsewhere. Let the Lords of the Admiralty, too, declare that there were no promises for places in the Customs. There was to be no impartial inquiry; not in an open court, nor trial by jury; but accusations were to be preferred upon the assertion of some individual, who might have been disappointed in his expectations. If this was to be the mode of dealing with the free exercise of the franchise, what were the circumstances in which any man would be safe? Why, the commonest Christian duties would be regarded as bribery. But he would tell the Commissioners to their faces, as he now told the House, that he had performed those duties, and that he would continue to do so, let the consequences be what they might. In spite of the Commissioners, he should exercise his power and influence as he and his forefathers had done, and as they were bound to do. He was not a man who would sanction bribery and corruption; but what was fair for Peter was fair for Paul. Therefore do not let them be partial, but treat all alike, and not select nine boroughs because a Committee of that House had reported them, whilst they left Horsham to remain for future consideration. His opinion was, that if the noble Lord could by any means quash all inquiry into the case of Horsham, it was his intention so to do. He should oppose the Bill in all its stages, and if it passed that House he should rely on another place, where there was more purity to be found, to treat the measure as it had done other Bills in the course of the present Session.

House in Committee.

COLONEL SIBTHORP moved that the Chairman do report progress and ask leave to sit again.

[The Committee divided; Colonel Sibthorp was appointed one of the Tellers for the Ayes; but no Member appearing to be a second Teller for the Ayes, the Chairman declared the Noes had it.]

On the 1st Clause,

MR. BANKES had an Amendment to move, which in reality involved the whole principle of the Bill. The measure was a most serious one, and well deserved the attention of the House. He must confess that he had heard nothing to remove the objections which he had formerly urged against it. If there was no other mode of preventing bribery, he could understand why it might be brought forward; but having seen the remedy proposed by the noble Lord at the head of the Government, he could only ask why that remedy was not applied? He objected to the Bill in the first place because it vested such large and extraordinary powers in the hands of those Commissioners. He did not suppose that they would not be fit and proper persons; but, exercising such functions, they ought to be not only honest, but, like the Judges of the land, above suspicion. Commissioners had been appointed under the Borough District Bill previously to the Reform Bill, and Commissioners had also been appointed to inquire into the Municipal Corporation Bill, previously to the passing of that measure. What was the result? In neither case was the result satisfactory. One instance which respected the first-named Commissioners he would mention. The Commissioners under the Borough District Dill recommended the disfranchising of Wareham and Dorchester. He (Mr. Bankes) strongly opposed that recommendation, and brought forward a Motion in the House to that effect, but it was lost by an immense majority. Such was the influence of the recommendation of the Commissioners. But ultimately those very boroughs were permitted to enjoy the franchise; because it was discovered that the statements which he had urged were perfectly true, and that the reports of the Commissioners, whether biassed by party or not, were at all events founded on error. The House might look upon the franchise of a town as a small matter, but those who possessed it did not view it in the same light. They regarded it as a dignity, as a high and important trust. It was desirable that they should continue so to consider it, and to view any interference with this precious privilege with the most jealous feelings. But the Bill would appoint Commissioners, who would have to deal with this most important privilege. And again he asked who were these Commissioners? They would not be men of any great eminence in their profession. Men of legal eminence would not accept of the post. None except members of the legal profession would be qualified to exercise its functions, whilst the emoluments offered were not such as to tempt men of standing or eminence to desert the courts, and adopt so comparatively ill-rewarded an office, and one too, be it recollected, of so transitory a nature. Again, Commissioners who were appointed by the Government would be always open to the suspicion of party bias. [The SOLICITOR GENERAL: They are appointed by the Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench.] But even so, how could this Government, or any Government, induce men of eminence to leave the foremost ranks of the profession for the remuneration they offered? It was not among the silk gowns they could make their selections; and barristers of unknown reputation would be liable to suspicion of a bias towards the Government of the day, though such suspicion might be unmerited. But it might be said, "Their opinion (meaning the Commissioners) is not to influence the House of Commons." Well, then, if not, of what use were their reports? Either they were or they were not to carry weight and authority by their decision. If the decision of the Commissioners was to influence the decision of that House, then the Commissioner ought to be a man of high attainments—of a high position—upon whom no suspicion could rest. If they were not, then the Commissioner and his army of clerks, for which the country was to pay, were wholly useless. The Commissioners were to have five guineas a day. Why this mode of payment was a bonus to prolong the investigation. This court, as it was called, was to have powers of the most inquisitorial nature—powers which should be most delicately exercised, and which it required all the wisdom and discretion of the superior courts to exercise in a proper or even tolerable manner. They were to issue summonses for the attendance of all parties whom they might choose to summon; and matters of the most delicate nature — matters involving breaches of honour, and trust, and confidence — all were to be referred to these inquisitorial gentlemen. In short, the powers of the Courts of Chancery, Queen's Bench, and Exchequer, were all to be concentrated in the focus of this new commission of one or two gentlemen sitting in a private room, and examining into matters affecting the highest and most dignified privileges which a British subject could possess. Points of honour might, and no doubt would, be involved in those inquiries, and books and documents of the most confidential nature might be demanded. He recollected a case where he (Mr. Bankes) had moved for the production of the books of a banker, and also for the attendance of a banker at the bar of the House. After the announcement of his intention, he received a communication indirectly addressed to him from this banker, in which it was intimated that his great anxiety of mind might lead to the affection of his senses, if the Motion was persevered in. He (Mr. Bankes) without swerving from what he considered to be his duty, did not persevere in demanding those disclosures, which would, as it appeared, have affected so seriously the honourable feelings of that individual. Why not pass a Bill empowering the House of Commons to appoint Committees in each case, and to examine witnesses upon oath, and to which there would be no objection? He knew that several Committees had decided upon unseating Members because of what was called "treating;" and this, legally speaking, is an offence; but surely some distinction ought to be made between the secret, base, and corrupt practice of bribery, to which he was utterly opposed, and the jovial though unlawful act of treating a friend and supporter to a pint of porter or a glass of brandy and water. In fact, this construction of what was termed treating was pushed too far, and was, in its present interpretation, revolting to the good sense and good feeling of Englishmen. Within what time could they hope to get any judgment in these inquiries? The Bill had not yet reached a very advanced stage. The Commissioners could not, in all probability, be appointed until the end of the Session; and the writs, in all these cases, were, it seems, to be suspended until the next Session. Then the House would have to consider all these reports, which would be the subject of great discussion; and it would be found that those reports, instead of the end, were only the beginning of the investigation. A measure more unworthy of any Government had, in his opinion, never been brought forward.

Sir J. HANMER said, that the course which was now proposed to be pursued was the same which was adopted in the case of the borough of Sudbury. Upon that occasion the whole question was fully considered, and the noble Lord now at the head of the Government, and the right hon. Gentleman who was at that period at the head of the Government, expressed their opinion in favour of appointing Commissioners. At that time no objection was made, that by taking such a course it would be derogatory to the dignity of Parliament. Neither was it contrary to the opinion of the other House of Parliament. The Bill was acted upon, and when the evidence came before the House, Parliament was enabled to do that which the constitution and the interests of the public demanded with respect to that borough. The course now proposed was not, therefore, a new one. It was warranted by the conduct of the last Parliament; that it should be held up as derogatory to the House, seemed to him perfectly unreasonable. He did not think that these were the times, nor was this the day, when the House ought to run the risk of its being considered in the country that it had any other intention than that of pursuing a direct and stringent course to put down bribery and corruption. The hon. Gentleman had said, that although this commission was to be appointed by the Lord Chief Justice, still it would be considered to have a political bias. He did not know why that should be the case, but he would ask whether the Election Committees of that House were not accused of having a political bias? ["No, no!"] He begged pardon; he did not mean to impute such a bias, but must repeat that the Election Committees were accused of having a political bias. He remembered a notorious case—the borough of Nottingham, when an hon. Baronet was chairman of that Committee. That hon. Baronet was repeatedly and warmly accused of having had a very unjust political bias, and in consequence of that bias of having unseated a certain hon. Gentleman. The hon. Gentleman had said that the people took a pride in the exercise of the franchise, and that it would very much wound that honest and dignified pride which they ought to feel when they saw a Commissioner coming down to inquire what had taken place in their borough. He was certainly surprised to hear such an objection. This Commission was to be carried into effect with regard to boroughs which were declared to have given a dishonest return, and of not having exercised the franchise with that feeling of honour and pride which he could wish every elector to exhibit. Those who acted from pure and disinterested motives could have no right to be offended at an inquiry instituted openly to detect the impure and the corrupt. On the contrary, all honourable men would be glad to see the present corrupt system purified and corrected, in order that the present disgraceful scenes might be totally annihilated. He had heard, in the course of the debate, a distinction attempted to be drawn between the honest and the dishonest voters in the same constituency. It was a very favourite argument—and one which was continually repeated—that looking at the evidence taken before the Committees, it appeared that a very small number of corrupt acts, of one sort or other, were on any occasion actually proved. In the first place, he need hardly remark that the number of cases proved before the Committees went for very little. But he did not believe that honest voters, as they were called—men who were so far honest as that they did not sell their votes—were without fault in this matter; for they did not exercise the influence they ought, for the purpose of diminishing these evils. Speak to them, and they would tell you "that such and such things had always gone on, and must and would go on; that they could not prevent them—that they could only tell you frankly the state of the case, and leave you to judge whether, with your eyes open, you will stand for that place?" and, if not, they would find some other gentleman—on the first occasion nobody knew what took place—and so the practice would go on. In several of the boroughs meetings had been held in support of the Motion of the hon. Member (Mr. Hume), fixed for next Tuesday, and people spoke for this or that sort of suffrage, or mode of giving it; but they had not yet stood manfully before their fellow-townsmen as they ought, saying, "The time is come for a purer exercise of this great right of citizenship; the possession of it is claimed by many who have it not, and we may expect some impatience on their part, and it is incumbent upon us to do all in our power to put down corruption in this borough, and in order to that to make it our first and main consideration, and now that a certain line of political and fiscal policy is agreed on, to put aside all other political questions, and avail ourselves of the present lull in party strife, and unite to put down this venality." He did not know an instance in which that course had been taken, and he did know instances in which it ought. He knew instances in which questions arose at the last election with regard to very considerable places, whether or no particular individuals should stand—he knew that particular individuals had every solicitation to stand; and the reason was publicly stated, that they did not choose to stand for that place because they knew they could not do so without being implicated in corrupt practices. There seemed to be nothing, then, in this argument about "offending a just pride," either with regard to those who were palpably dishonest, or those who were called honest electors. The hon. Member (Mr. Bankes) objected that Parliament would be acting upon the opinion of the Commissioner; but that was not so. The Commissioner would get evidence, and on that evidence draw up a proper report, upon which Parliament would act according to its judgment, as it might think fit. Then the objection of expense was raised, and a return of the cost of some past inquiries had been moved for; but those were inquiries before Committees of that House, and surely expense was a matter of secondary consideration compared with the object in view.

Mr. ANSTEY said, it appeared that the object of the present Bill was not what it had been originally stated to be by the hon. Baronet who had just sat down. It was no longer a Bill for the purpose of securing a judicial inquiry into the delinqencies of particular boroughs, but for the purpose of giving effect to the objects of the hon. Member for Montrose, who in a few days would bring forward a measure for the utter extinction of the small constituencies. According to the hon. Baronet, the dishonest voters and the honest were equally to blame—the former for their dishonesty, the latter for their negligence; so that, whether they belonged to the first or the second class, they were to be delivered up now to the discretion of some obscure and briefless barrister, and hereafter to suffer disfranchisement. This was the punishment the hon. Baronet proposed for those who, having tempted him and others to become candidates on former occasions, had not been able to ensure him and them the coveted seat, without some of that corruption which, it was to be hoped, he was always as unwilling as now to encourage. He (Mr. Anstey) would not follow the hon. Baronet into the cases to which he had alluded, but which he had not specified. He could not doubt the truth of the representations made by one so much better informed than himself as to the extent of venality in the constituencies formerly represented by the hon. Baronet. Into those cases he would not go, because in the first place the hon. Baronet had not stated what he meant; and in the second place, he was not locally acquainted, and was not aware of the amount of venality which prevailed in the various constituencies which the hon. Member had represented. But he trusted the House would take into its consideration that these constituencies were no longer represented by the hon. Baronet, and that it did not appear from the reports of the Committee upon the table of the House, that these constituencies were any longer stained with corrupt practices. As to the other boroughs, which it was proposed by this Bill to disfranchise —the boroughs which were described in Clause 17, but not named in the Act or the schedule—he had a question to put, not to the hon. Baronet, but to the two other Members whose names were on the back of this Bill—and to ask them to tell him, and to tell the House, what great offence had these constituencies committed that they should be deprived of that institution which lovers of liberty, like the hon. Member for Montrose and the hon. Member for Hull, had been in the habit of regarding as the chief birthright of Englishmen—trial by jury? For the inquiry was not only to be conducted by this possibly incapable barrister, but the parties were to be deprived of all control over his exercise of those tremendous functions. Not only was an inquisition set up, but trial by jury was in terms taken away; everything was submitted to the absolute and unenlightened discretion of one barrister; and none but a barrister of small practice and small means was likely to take this precarious appointment, that might last only a few weeks, and yet would withdraw him from the ordinary haunts of his profession. These powers were such as were not enjoyed by any court of law, not even by the highest court—the High Court of Parliament. The Bill took away the right, which every client had, to be sheltered by the professional privilege of his attorney or solicitor: it took away from a man the privilege which, according to the present practice in Westminster Hall, such person had, of being permitted to pour his sorrows into the breast of his adviser, without exposing himself to the consequences of that adviser being called upon to violate the seal under which the revelation was made. This Bill, emanating from a liberal party—from Members supposed to be devoted to the great cause of the people—had hitherto met with no opposition whatever, excepting from a party who had been too frequently branded as the enemies of the people, and the friends of arbitrary power. He felt that he should not discharge his duty if he did not pledge himself to resist, by every constitutional means in his power, the passing of the Bill. He differed from the hon. Baronet (Sir J. Hanmer) as to the manner in which this Bill ought to be debated, considering, as he did, that the whole principle of the Bill must properly be discussed on the first clause, which appointed certain persons to make certain inquiries. Now, if on looking through the Bill he (Mr. Anstey) had found one single provision made for an inquiry which deserved the indulgent consideration of the House, he would have postponed his censure of the clauses obnoxious to censure until they came under examination. But when he found throughout the whole compass of the Bill not one clause which was not obnoxious—not one inquiry directed which was not in its nature unconstitutional, and partial in its operation—he thought that he was bound to take his stand with the hon. and learned Member behind him (Mr. Bankes), and to debate the whole Bill upon the clause for nominating those Commissioners by whom such inquiries were to be prosecuted, and "the purposes of the Act" accomplished. He would not repeat what had been so ably said by the hon. and learned Member behind him (Mr. Bankes). He would confine himself to a point which that hon. and learned Gentleman had omitted to present to the House, probably from a consideration that the attention of the House must have been already drawn to matters so obvious and glaring. He begged to call the attention of the House to the 10th Clause, which offered a direct premium to perjury. It was called an indemnity clause; but it was no such thing. It was a clause offering a reward to parties to come forward and give the required evidence. It stated that whoever should come forward and give evidence before the Commission, would be held free from all the penal consequences which otherwise might have resulted from the commission of certain offences at any election. Now, supposing some voter had been guilty of bribery at some former election—for the clause specified no particular election—and for which he was liable to be prosecuted—[The SOLICITOR GENERAL: There is the Statute of Limitation.] No doubt there is the Statute of Limitation. But he was supposing a case where the statute had not run, and where the circumstances of guilt did not admit of the culprit's pleading that statute effectually. [An Hon. MEMBER: You cannot go back to a former election.] He could assure the hon. Member that his law was erroneous. If the period of limitation had not elapsed, it signified nothing whether a new election had or had not taken place—whether a new Parliament was or was not sitting. The parties might still be prosecuted in a court of criminal justice. Well, then, suppose some voter in Lincoln or Hull had been guilty of bribery at some former election, and was liable to a penal action and forfeiture—at the suit of the Crown or a private informer—the man had only to come forward and commit perjury, and swear that at the last election he acted as the agent or the accomplice of some candidate in giving or receiving a bribe; and having in this way complied with the conditions of the clause, he was not only freed from all consequences of his former offence, but became a witness, upon whose testimony the borough itself might be disfranchised. The whole Bill was open to similar objections. As to the future, it was provided that the same machinery should be set in motion under similar circumstances; and anybody could easily foresee the handle which hon. Gentlemen opposite—Liberals as they were—would make of that power in the way of extinguishing small constituencies. The 17th Clause provided, that with respect to future elections, the Speaker should appoint other Commissioners to act with the person appointed under the first clause; and whenever a small borough was accused of treating, some hon. Member would be sure to move the suspension of the writ, and the same process would be followed. It was not difficult to foresee that not a single small constituency would obtain its writ, and this would be found a convenient mode of forcing on the great scheme of reform which the hon. Member for Montrose was to bring forward in the course of another week. But was this a just proceeding? If this Bill, however, was to extend to cases *in posse*, why should it not extend to some great and notorious cases which had really occurred, like that of Galway? The Marquess of Clanricarde, a Cabinet Minister, was charged upon petition, and also by hon. Members in their places in that House, with interference at a former election for Galway; and those charges were never answered. It might be true that these charges rested upon hearsay and rumour; but what had the hon. Baronet better than hearsay and rumour to justify his proceeding against Horsham and some other of the places comprehended in his Bill? The hon. Baronet included at least two boroughs in his Bill, because treating was charged against them; but, with all respect for the right hon. Member for Tamworth, and his Act of Parliament, he (Mr. Anstey) would contend that treating was only *malum quia prohibitum.* No purist ever pretended that it was *malum in se.* He denied that treating and bribery could be regarded, under any aspect, as offences equal in degree. Bribery was an offence against the laws of God and man; treating had only been rendered an offence by Act of Parliament. He would illustrate the working of the law of treating by what took place at the Youghal election. There were about thirty voters too honest to take a bribe, although it had been offered; but yet, owing to the failure of their means of subsistence, too poor to live without Government aid. These poor people were in the daily receipt of rations of Indian corn, and on Saturday they received double allowance. The election took place on a Saturday; but so anxious were his Election Committee to guard against the law of treating being infringed, that they were actually obliged to withhold from the poor creatures a slice of bread and a drink of water, because if such refreshment had been given to one, it would have been held as given to all; and if it had, a handle would have been given to the hon. Baronet (Sir John Hanmer) to get up a case against the election and the constituency. He held that he should not discharge his duty to his own constituents, if he did not avail himself of every constitutional means to defeat the Bill. The only result of this sort of legislation would be to weaken the force of the laws that were made, by confounding the distinction which poor men now drew in their own minds between right and wrong. He should certainly use every endeavour to resist the further progress of so objectionable a measure.

Mr. HUDSON had been anxious to hear the noble Lord opposite (Lord J. Russell) say something on this Bill; but he seemed to be enjoying a repose which, no doubt, he very much needed, and which he did not mean to disturb by anything he said relative to this Bill. He should have liked also to hear the Attorney General in reply to the speech of the hon. Member for Youghal, whose observations on the Bill were certainly such as to excite alarm in the minds of those who, like him, did not pretend to judge of the working of the law. They were about to direct inquiry into the conduct of certain constituencies; but the hon. Baronet who introduced the Bill had not gone into any detail as to the charges against those constituencies. He had never attempted to make out a case beyond that of a general one of corruption against certain constituencies; and the presumption on his side of the House certainly was, that the hon. Baronet was merely speaking from the experience he had obtained of the different constituencies he had himself represented. He had no doubt that, if he had told his own experience, he would have given them more information than they were likely to obtain from the Commissioner who was to be appointed, probably at a great expense, under the Bill. It would have been but fair if the hon. Baronet had told them some of the secrets of the prison-house. He had been on both sides of the House; probably he knew the secrets on that (the Conservative) side, and no doubt he had been let into the secrets of the prison-house on the other side. The hon. Baronet talked about purity; but all of them liked purity, and admired virtue in any shape. It was not possible, however, to obtain perfection in this world; and therefore, as practical men, they shut their eyes to many things they were unable to prevent. If a law could be so framed as to make every man honest, it would be very desirable to introduce it. Everybody knew, however, that such a thing was altogether impracticable; and that so long as the world existed, and the frailties of human nature were what they were, such purity was out of the question. The Bill of the hon. Baronet referred to certain boroughs; but no Member would venture to say that those boroughs were worse than others. They were brought forward only because it so happened that certain parties had petitioned against them. There was nothing against them but the miserable charge of treating; but he would ask if they imagined that money in treating was the only means of corruption? There were many other means of corruption besides that. Suppose he went down to a constituency and told them he was about to confer impossibilities upon them by the adoption of certain measures, though he in his conscience knew that they would be productive of no good at all; suppose he was to make the most magnificent promises that he would confer immense benefits upon them, was not that corruption calculated to lead away a whole borough as much as money or treating? Why, the borough of Sunderland had been largely treated to such fine promises as these by the Members of the Anti-Corn-Law League, including the hon. Member for Manchester, and eight or ten more, who held out to the constituency of Sunderland the great advantages they would derive from the abolition of the corn laws—all of them great promises, which they must have known were perfectly fallacious. But there was another kind of bribery that was included in the power of property. The noble Lord opposite had sometimes found his way into that House through the influences of property; and there could be no question that in some boroughs parties had been returned solely through the influence of property. He did not find fault with this; but why was it not proposed to make inquiry into that kind of corruption? If the Gentlemen opposite were such firm believers in the principles they were so often urging, why not bring them into practical operation in that House? Why did the noble Lord not tell his supporters that he would not give this or that place, or reward any man for his support with such places as a recordership, unless he was superior in qualifications to any other man in the House? They all knew that such places were given to those who supported the Government; but why should not the noble Lord follow, in this respect, the course he wished to see adopted with reference to constituencies? How many hon. Members of that House had received appointments under the Crown only because they gave their support to the Government of the day? He did not find fault with this, nor did he say the present Government was different in this respect from any other; but he wished to know why the principle should be different there from what it was wished to be among the constituencies? The Attorney General, he understood, repudiated this Bill; and certainly he should like to hear the Solicitor General answer some of the statements of the hon. Member for Youghal. The hon. and learned Gentleman seemed to deny an assertion put forward by that hon. Gentleman; but having denied it, he thought it but fair that he should explain to the House the grounds on which he acted. He considered that if this Bill was adopted it would create heartburnings and ill-feeling in many towns, which would not be compensated by any advantages that might result from the measure. The hon. Member for Montrose, in his green old age, was about to submit to the House an extensive measure of reform. Why, then, should the House now sanction the appointment of Commissions to inquire into the gift of a few shillings to a few poor electors? Why should they send Commissioners, who would receive five guineas a day, into the country to inquire whether the present of a new hat was intended to influence a vote? They had been told that the present Parliament was an economical Parliament; but he could not think it was so if it sanctioned the expenditure of the public money about such matters as these. He must say, that he had seen no movement in the direction of economy during the present Session. The Government had, in a very convenient manner, delegated their authority to Committees, but these Committees had not yet made any report to the House. He knew something about the expense of election inquiries. He once stood before a Committee of that House for three days, and answered 1,200 questions. He knew that every lawyer employed had five guineas a day. He was not so wide awake then as he was now, and he only got a guinea for three days, and outside coach expenses. He believed that inquiry did not cost less than 7,000*l.*, and the result was that a large blue book was laid on the table, and heartburnings were excited which were not allayed for years. The fact was, that an attempt was made to get up a case against the poor freemen. It was true that, for a length of time, these poor people might have been receiving small sums from the Members. Perhaps 200 or 300 persons might be found in a constituency of 4,000 or 5,000, who had received what some people called a "bribe;" but the same thing was done by both parties, and the recipients of these sums did not look upon them as bribes. He must say that he had seen instances of as great virtue, of as stern integrity, and of as determined independence, on the part of great numbers of these freemen as he had ever witnessed among other persons. He did not see the noble Member for Falkirk (Lord Lincoln) in his place; but he remembered that a large paper was sent down into the country, at the time to which he had been alluding, giving the names of those who voted for the freemen in red ink, and those who voted against them in black. The name of the noble Member for Falkirk was then among those printed in red ink, and the names of many hon. Gentlemen opposite were printed in black. When he saw the anxiety now shown to make a case against the freemen, he might be allowed to remind the House that the noble Lord opposite (Lord J. Russell) had never cited the case of the 10*l.* householders of Cheltenham. In that town, there were no freemen; the constituency consisted of 10*l.* householders; but it was proved that corruption had been practised, and the Member was unseated. Now, hon. Gentlemen who appeared so anxious for the disfranchisement of the freemen, did not think it necessary to refer to this case. He had been told by the hon. Baronet (Sir J. Hanmer) the name of the person who was to be the Chief Commissioner under this Bill, if it received the assent of the House. That hon. Gentleman did not tell him this as any secret, but informed him that the hon. Gentleman and the Government had fixed upon the same person for this office. They were now told that the appointment was to made by the Chief Justice, and he (Mr. Hudson) thought it could not be in better hands. But the hon. Baronet told him (Mr. Hudson) that the late Member for Bath (Mr. Roebuck) was to be the Chief Commissioner. He entertained great respect for the abilities of that learned Gentleman, and perhaps a more amiable man could not be selected for an office of this kind, or one more likely to carry out the beneficial intentions of the hon. Baronet. If Parliament delegated its authority in these matters to a Commissioner, they might imagine that Commissioner arriving with great pomp in the city of Lincoln; perhaps, he might be received by the high sheriff; he would hold his court and summon witnesses. He (Mr. Hudson) had had his banking accounts ransacked by a Committee of the House of Commons, because he would not give information which, as an honourable man, he conceived he ought not to give without the consent of the individuals by whom he had been trusted; and for pursuing this conduct he had been threatened with committal to Newgate. Now, the Commissioner to be appointed under this Bill might summon bankers, and require the production of banking books or ledgers. On the occasion to which he had alluded, a banking establishment was subjected to the inconvenience of sending their ledger to London for the inspection of a Committee, who examined the account of an individual, and might have published it if they had chosen; and had this been done, and had the individual in question been indebted to his bankers, it might have had a serious effect upon his credit. Now, hon. Gentleman did not know whose banking accounts might be called for during election inquiries, and, therefore, he recommended them to be careful how they voted upon this Bill. There might be an inquiry into an election for the city of London, and they might have the banking account of the noble Lord opposite (Lord J. Russell) examined by a Committee. If inquiries of the nature to be authorised by this Bill were instituted, there was no man against whom they could not be directed. The House would be laying down a precedent which, though applicable immediately only to 12 or 13 boroughs, would, on a subsequent occasion, become applicable to some 300 boroughs. Hon. Gentlemen opposite would be told of that precedent when, in another Parliament, they found themselves in a minority. Provision was made for prosecution under the Bill, but there was no provision for the defence. In the York case counsel and attorneys for the defence were allowed at the expense of the country. He hoped the authorities of the boroughs would show their indignation at the Star-chamber inquisitions which it was proposed to institute by refusing the use of their town-halls for the prosecution of such investigations. If there were cases of corruption among the humble classes of a constituency, there were cases, on the other hand, in which electors whose position was higher were actuated by motives which, when fully examined, would be found to be equally corrupt; and he hoped, for the sake of the constituencies, for the sake of the House, that a system of inquiry would not be insisted upon which must involve so useless an expenditure of money.

Lord J. RUSSELL had hoped that the progress of the present Bill would not have been marked by any departure from the usual mode of carrying on business. He must own he had been disappointed, because, after the House had assented to the second reading, and had taken a further debate on going into Committee, after each question had been decided by a majority in favour of the Bill, and the House had gone into Committee to-night, they had had the whole matter argued over again—not with reference to the form of inquiry to be instituted, but on the question whether any Bill of this kind should be introduced at all. The hon. and learned Member for Dorsetshire argued the question very fairly on the second reading, maintaining that the House ought to make inquiry by a Committee as he (Lord J. Russell) had proposed in the case of Horsham. A great deal was to be said for that mode of proceeding. It was the least expensive; and both Houses of Parliament would have the whole evidence before them on the subject. On the second reading that was a fair question to place before the House. When the House had approved the principle of the Bill, it was not to be anticipated that on the first clause of the Bill in Committee, that discussion was to be recommenced. The hon. Member who had just sat down had used arguments directed rather against any kind of Bill such as that proposed by the hon. Baronet, than bearing on the first clause, which was now under consideration. The hon. Member had touched on some matters which did not seem worthy of notice. He could not see why any personal attack on the hon. Baronet should be allowed to enter into the question; and, regretting in common with the hon. Member, the absence of the noble Lord the Member for Falkirk, whose support in Committee he would have been glad of, he hoped the House would not consent any longer to argue on the general merits, whether a Bill of this kind should be introduced or not—whether the mode of proceeding proposed was the best or not—but would proceed to consider such questions as that on which the hon. Member had touched for two minutes in his speech—whether sums should be allowed for the prosecution, and not for the defence.

Mr. GODSON wished to know whether the Government had obtained the sanction of the Lord Chief Justice to that provision of the Bill by which he was empowered to appoint Commissioners? [Sir G. Grey: We have.] Then, the important question arose, how far would the House of Commons be giving away its jurisdiction? If the House were also to determine that all election petitions should be decided on by a Judge of the land and a jury, there would then be very little bribery or treating; because it would be put an end to, as the matter would then be decided according to evidence in a court of law, and not according to the fancy of Members of a Committee, and not by a Committee composed of two Members of one set of politics and two Members of another, with the chance of having a chairman on the one side or other. By this Bill the first Commissioners were to be appointed by the Lord Chief Justice. Why not the future Commissioners also, if the principle were good? The future Commissioners, however, were to be named by the Speaker. He should vote against the clause on account of this contradiction.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL observed, that the Lord Chief Justice had given his sanction to the proposition that he should appoint such persons as Commissioners under the Bill as he might think fitted for the duty. In this respect the House was not parting with its jurisdiction, nor was the case of the election petitions at all analogous to the present. In reference to election petitions, the Committee was invested with judicial capacity to decide whether the person petitioned against was or was not a Member of the House; but under this Bill the Commissioners had no power to decide anything. It was a mistake to suppose that they were to disfranchise boroughs. The whole object of the Bill was to establish the most convenient and least expensive mode of collecting evidence, which the House was afterwards to decide upon. There was, undoubtedly, an apparent inconsistency in the Lord Chief Justice nominating in the first instance, and the Speaker afterwards. That arose in this way:—It was usual to name the Commissioners in the Bill, but it was thought that if that course were followed, objections might be taken that the parties named were selected for party purposes, and it was, therefore, deemed better to give the selection of the Commissioners to an individual who could not be supposed to be influenced by party motives. Consequently, the Lord Chief Justice was chosen for this duty, the Speaker not being desirous to perform it in the first instance.

On every subsequent vacancy, however, the Speaker might appoint the person, as in the Sudbury case, to fill up the vacancy. Consequently, there was in substance no inconsistency. With respect to the principle of the Bill, he thought it an inconvenient course again to discuss it, as it had been already decided on by the House on three separate divisions; and he knew not how Gentlemen opposite could complain of the Government not pressing the Bill forward, as the delay was occasioned by the unusual resistance given to the measure.

Mr. HENLEY said, that as the noble Lord had complained of the desultory debate on the principle of the Bill, he would ask what occasioned that? Why, the hon. Baronet who had charge of the Bill had slipped in words constituting the mode in which these Commissioners were to be appointed, without one word of explanation, and totally contrary to what the House was led to believe would be the mode of naming the Commissioners; for the clause was printed in reference to Commissioners being named in the Bill. It was not until the Solicitor General was called up by the observations of the hon. and learned Member (Mr. Godson) that any explanation was given with respect to the new provision of the Bill. But on whose authority was it that the Solicitor said that the Lord Chief Justice consented to the arrangement? Did he make that statement on the part of the Government, and was this the Bill of the Government? It was a serious thing to determine whether they should mix up the Lord Chief Justice with the appointments of these persons, whom the Government, perhaps, had chosen beforehand. It had been publicly stated that one of the Commissioners was to be a particular individual. Had they taken means to ascertain whether the Lord Chief Justice would make that appointment? The only observation made by the hon. Baronet (Sir J. Hanmer) on the clause under consideration was, that he thought the House was going to take a very direct and stringent course of proceeding. He would show that this was the case. The power of naming the Commissioners was taken from the House, and then, by way of pretending to do a great act of justice, they said that they would give authority to the Lord Chief Justice to appoint these persons. Was this all? The next line gave the power of appointing additional Commissioners, in case the House should resolve that it was necessary to do so for the more speedy execution of the Act. Thus, if the Commissioners appointed by the Lord Chief Justice should not go on as they (the majority of that House) thought proper, then they might appoint other Commissioners. Thus, after having two or three Commissioners working at Lincoln, they might send down five new Commissioners to supersede them. This certainly was a direct and stringent course of proceeding. They departed from the usual course of naming the Commissioners in the Bill, and threw the selection on the Lord Chief Justice; and yet, after all, they did not trust him. If the Commissioners did not do as they were wanted, the House might appoint "three other spirits more wicked than themselves." And this was what was called a direct and stringent way of doing business. He agreed with them; it was a very stringent way. He had great objections to the Bill itself, but he confessed he disliked the mode of carrying the Bill into effect more than he disliked the Bill, because it afforded abundant room for unfairness and mismanagement. There was a question which he wished to ask the Solicitor General, for he seemed to have taken the Bill out of the hands of the hon. Baronet behind him, and to have adopted it as a Government Bill: would the Commissioners to be appointed under the first clause die with the boroughs named in the schedule, or were they to form a standing commission for all time?

Sir G. GREY would endeavour to answer the three questions which he understood the hon. Gentleman to have put. The first was, whether the Chief Justice had consented to nominate a particular gentleman whom he (Mr. Henley) had heard had been already selected for the office of one of the Commissioners? With respect to that question, he (Sir G. Grey) had to answer that no nomination had been made, and that if the clause was adopted, the Chief Justice would have the power of selecting any person from the bar of England for the office whom he pleased, without reference to any previous selection. The next question of the hon. Member was, whether in the event of the House resolving that, for the more speedy execution of the Act, an additional number of Commissioners should be appointed, the House was to appoint those Commissioners? He (Sir G. Grey) wondered that the hon. Member, who was usually so accurate, should not have seen that the House was not to appoint these Commissioners, but that they were to be appointed by the very mode which the hon. Member himself said he would not object to, namely, by the Speaker. With respect to the last question, whether in the event of subsequent cases occurring under the 17th Clause, the first commission was to continue as a permanent commission, or whether other Commissioners were to be appointed, he begged to say, that if the hon. Member read the 17th Clause attentively he would see that the Commissioners to be appointed, with reference to future cases, were not to be appointed by the Chief Justice, but by the Speaker.

Mr. HENLEY said, that what he objected to was the double mode of appointment, because by that means the House, in the event of any of the Commissioners not pleasing them, might keep forcing the Speaker to add to their number until they had got such as did please them.

Mr. ANSTEY protested against the language held by the noble Member for London when he said that hon. Gentlemen had not addressed themselves to the question before the House. For his part he should not submit to such dictation.

The Committee divided on the question that the clause as amended stand part of the Bill:—Ayes 108; Noes 39: Majority 69.

List of the Ayes.

Adair, R. A. S.
Aglionby, H. A.
Anson, hon. Col.
Armstrong, Sir A.
Armstrong, R. B.
Bagshaw, J.
Bellew, R. M.
Birch, Sir T. B.
Bowring, Dr.
Boyle, hon. Col.
Brotherton, J.
Buller, C.
Bunbury, E. H.
Campbell, hon. W. F.
Carew, W. H. P.
Clay, J.
Clifford, H. M.
Craig, W. G.
Crawford, W. S.
Davie, Sir H. R. F.
Divett, E.
Duncan, G.
Dundas, Adm.
Ebrington, Visct.
Ellice, E.
Elliot, hon. J. E.
Estcourt, J. B. B.
Fordyce, A. D.
Fox, W. J.
Freestun, Col.
Glyn, G. C.
Granger, T. C.
Greene, T.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Grosvenor, Lord R.
Hall, Sir B.
Hallyburton, Lord J. F.
Hawes, B.
Hayter, W. G.
Henry, A.
Heywood, J.
Hill, Lord M.
Hindley, C.
Hollond, R.
Howard, hon. C. W. G.
Howard, Sir R.
Hume, J.
Jervis, Sir J.
King, hon. P. J. L.
Lewis, G. C.
Littleton, hon. E. R.
M'Gregor, J.
Maher, N. V.
Mahon, The O'Gorman
Mangles, R. D.
Marshall, W.
Matheson, Col.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Melgund, Visct.
Milner, W. M. E.
Mitchell, T. A.
Monsell, W.
Morpeth, Visct.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Mulgrave, Earl of
Ogle, S. C. H.
Paget, Lord A.
Palmer, R.
Parker, J.
Pearson, C.
Pechell, Capt.
Perfect, R.
Pigott, F.
Pinney, W.
Raphael, A.
Reynolds, J.
Ricardo, O.
Rich, H.
Robartes, T. J. A.
Roche, E. B.
Romilly, Sir J.
Russell, Lord J.
Russell, F. C. H.
Salwey, Col.
Scholefield, W.
Seymer, H. K.
Simeon, J.
Somerville, rt. hon. Sir W.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Strickland, Sir G.
Sullivan, M.
Talbot, C. R. M.
Talfourd, Serj.
Thompson, Col.
Thornely, T.
Tollemache, hon. J. F.
Towneley, C.
Townshend, Capt.
Trelawny, J. S.
Tufnell, H.
Vivian, J. H.
Wilcox, B. M.
Wilson, J.
Wilson, M.
Wood, rt. hon. Sir C.
Wood, W. P.
Wyld, J.
Wyvill, M.

TELLERS.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Baines, M. T.

List of the Noes.

Anstey, T. C.
Archdall, Capt.
Baring, T.
Barrington, Visct.
Benbow, J.
Beresford, W.
Bourke, R. S.
Bruce, C. L. C.
Buck, L. W.
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Burrell, Sir C. M.
Christy, S.
Dodd, G.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Edwards, H.
Godson, R.
Goring, C.
Grogan, E.
Gwyn, H.
Hall, Col.
Heneage, G. H. W.
Henley, J. W.
Hildyard, R. C.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hobhouse, T. B.
Hood, Sir A.
Ingestre, Visct.
Mackenzie, W. F.
Newdegate, C. N.
Pakington, Sir J.
Palmer, R.
Rolleston, Col.
Sibthorp, Col.
Smyth, J. G.
Spooner, R.
Stuart, H.
Taylor, T. E.
Urquhart, D.
Vivian, J. E.

TELLERS.
Bankes, G.
Hudson, G.

Clause to stand part of the Bill.

House resumed.

Committee to sit again.

House adjourned at a quarter to One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, June 16, 1848.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—1° Protection of Justices from Vexatious Actions; Administration of Justice (No. 2); Administration of Justice (No. 1).

Petitions Presented. From Horncastle, and a great number of other Places, against the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on the Sabbath.—From Guardians of the Taunton Union, for the Adoption of Measures for the Better Prevention of Vagrancy.—From the Haymarket and Lyceum Theatres, for Limiting the Number of Foreign Theatres in the Metropolis.—From Bristol, against any Alteration in the Navigation Laws.—From Forres, for Alteration of the Laws relating to Lunatics and Lunatic Asylums in Scotland.—From Kirkmichael, and a great number of other Places, against the Marriage (Scotland) Bill, and the Registering Births, &c. (Scotland) Bill.

FOREIGN THEATRES.

Earl FITZHARDINGE presented two petitions—one from Mr. Webster, lessee and manager of "the Little Theatre in the Haymarket," and the other from the performers of the Lyceum Theatre, signed by about 110 persons. The petitioners represented that the patronage bestowed upon foreign theatrical entertainments in London was injurious to English actors, and crushed all the efforts to support the national drama of this country. The petitioners stated that they wished to raise no objection to the Italian Opera, so long established, nor to the French Company at the St. James's Theatre; but the petitioners stated that recently, in addition to these, there had been another Italian opera opened, served entirely by foreign artists, and a troop of French equestrians had been performing at Drury-lane Theatre; and they found it now announced that Drury-lane Theatre was again let to a French company, from the Theâtre Historique, Paris, for the performance of melodrame. He (Earl Fitzhardinge) by no means advocated protection to particular classes in regard to amusements, any more than in regard to the necessaries of life; but an actor was probably rather more entitled to consideration in this respect than any other class. He could not, like a painter or author, dispose of the produce of his talent; he could only exercise it in his own person. But, though disposed to a certain extent to sympathise with the petitioners, no person could deprecate more strongly than himself the infamous—he could use no milder term—the infamous attempt of certain individuals to put down the present performances at Drury-lane Theatre. He was happy to say, on the part of the respectable members of the dramatic profession, that they repudiated it as strongly as any men could do, and were no parties to it. He could state that on the authority of Mr. Webster, than whom a more respectable and talented member of that profession did not exist. He (Earl Fitzhardinge) told a deputation that waited on him on the previous day, that if he thought the profession would lend themselves to so barbarous a practice he would not present this petition. Mr. Webster's petition stated—

> "That the circumstance of Drury-lane and Covent-garden Theatres being open for foreign, and not English performance, tended to pervert and vitiate the taste of the public, and to distract them from the love and patronage of the English drama."

It represented—

> "That Her Majesty's Italian Theatre in the Haymarket, and the French Theatre in St. James's, were known to be more than adequate for the wants of the nobility, gentry, and the public, who patronised foreign performances;"

and it prayed the House—

> "To consider the propriety of the adoption of some measure for restricting foreign performances to two theatres in the metropolis, in order that the apparently inevitable downfall of the higher order of British drama as an art, in writing and in acting, might be averted, and that the English theatres, which were entirely matters of private speculation at present, unsupported by patronage or protection, might be enabled to continue to support the numerous performers, mechanics, and others, dependent upon, connected with, and living by those establishments."

The other petition prayed for some enactment to restrict the number of foreign theatres in the metropolis to those already established.

Lord BEAUMONT thought the petitions appeared to be conceived in a most illiberal spirit. The petitioners seemed to act exactly like the dog in the manger; they were not able themselves, by their talents and attractions, to fill the theatre, and they wished to keep the doors of it shut against those who were willing to try whether they could. There ought to be no interference of the Legislature beyond what was necessary for the protection of morals; the principle of free trade ought to be allowed to operate, and talent to have a clear stage and fair play.

Lord BROUGHAM had been applied to to support the prayer of these petitions, but he really could not. Would it be any benefit to English workmen to have the theatre shut up? He must take that opportunity of expressing the disgust with which he had read accounts of scenes which did such discredit to the good sense as well as to the justice and peaceable conduct of the frequenters of our theatres. Nothing could more tend to injure our countrymen abroad; we should have this quoted as a sort of bad justification of, or set-off against, the ill-treatment of English workmen there.

The Duke of CLEVELAND was sorry to find the name of an eminent actor, such as Mr. Webster really was, appended to one of these petitions; though the English drama had been at a low ebb of late years, his theatre had been generally full. If Drury-lane Theatre could be filled by English artists, there might be some ground for the complaint that it was let to French; but it had been attempted in vain, to the ruin of many who had made the effort. No English company being ready to take it, why should Mr. Webster complain of its being let to a French company? If they did not give satisfaction, the undertaking would soon wear itself out. The noble Duke condemned the conduct of those who had interrupted the performances at Drury-lane Theatre, and expressed his regret that these petitions were presented, and his wish that the noble Earl would withdraw them.

Earl SPENCER was understood to intimate his satisfaction in observing the expression of opinion on the subject elicited from the House. With regard to the outrages which had occurred, he felt as strongly as any noble Lord who had spoken; but it was not in his power as Lord Chamberlain to interfere with them. He left them to the police; and he believed that the magistrates had taken the proper course.

Earl FITZHARDINGE wished to state that, in consequence of what he saw in the *Times* that day, with reference to an actor who had been charged at Bow-street with most scandalous conduct, he had written a note to Mr. Webster expressing his strong opinion that the conduct of the person in question, and of others who engaged in these riots, was most prejudicial to the cause of the English performers.

Lord BEAUMONT said, that he had been to the Haymarket and Lyceum Theatres, and had seen at both those houses plays which were translated from the French. Now, if the choice lay between a bad translation of a French piece, and the same piece in the original, he would prefer the latter.

Petitions to lie on the table.

THE CORN LAWS.

Lord STANLEY: My Lords, in calling your Lordships' attention — which I shall do very shortly—to the present state of the laws regulating the importation of foreign corn, I desire to preface the very few observations I have to make by the declaration that I have in no degree altered or modified the views I have before expressed in this House with regard to the propriety and policy of giving protection to the agricultural industry of this country. But I do not desire to invite your Lordships to any discussion, on the present occasion, on the policy of that principle, as I am desirous of keeping it altogether apart and separate from that view of the question which alone I am desirous of laying before your Lordships, and to which I invite the attention of your Lordships and of Her Majesty's Government. I have, my Lords, heard it stated more than once, and I recollect reading more than once, and not long ago, that it was exceedingly fortunate that, at a time when general distress was prevailing in this country, and when very general dissatisfaction was also prevailing, that distress was not aggravated, and that dissatisfaction was not increased, by the existence of any corn law which might tend to increase that discontent, and aggravate that distress, by augmenting the price of the food of the people. Now, my Lords, that observation was certainly not a very correct one, because those who made it must have omitted to recollect that at the present moment—though not, certainly, adding to the discontent in the slightest degree, or in the slightest degree decreasing the supply of food—there was in existence a corn law, under the operation of which law the duty upon the importation of foreign corn was considerably higher than the average payments upon a series of years under the corn laws which were abolished in 1846. My Lords, it will not be necessary for me to remind your Lordships that upon the repeal of the corn laws in 1846, a temporary law was introduced, which was intended to be in operation for a period of two years, similar in principle to that for which it was substituted—I mean similar in principle, as far as it proceeded on the principle of fixing the duties according to a sliding-scale, namely, fixing the duty according to the price of corn upon an average of weeks. I do not mean to say that they are actually identical, I mean only upon the same principle—assuming the principle of the sliding-scale—that sliding-scale, however, being of less extent, less range and compass, than that which it superseded, that is, taking a lower price by which the 20*s*. duty under the old law was reduced to 8*s*. But that is not the case under the operation of the temporary law as it stands at this moment, for the duty, as now paid upon the importation and introduction into consumption in this country of wheat, amounts to no less than 9*s*. a quarter. I do not pretend to say that the Legislature intended that the Act so introduced in 1846 should have more than a temporary operation; but it certainly was intended that the Act should be in operation for a period of two years from the time of its introduction, during which the country would have an opportunity of watching the operation of the substitute, and at the expiration of that time it would be for Parliament to judge, by the experience they had had, whether any modification should be made. Now, my Lords, you are aware that very shortly after the introduction of that Bill, there was a failure of the potato crop in Ireland, and general distress prevailed, which, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, and, I believe, I may say in the opinion of the country, rendered it a matter of importance that no restriction in the way of duty should stand in the way of importation of provisions for the purpose of meeting the temporary exigencies of the occasion. But the consequence of the repeal—or the suspension rather—of the temporary law which took place, has been, that instead of having had the experience of two years, we have had an experience practically of little more than three months up to the present time; and if Parliament should separate at the usual time, towards the close of the month of July, or at the beginning of August, Parliament will not have had experience of the operation of that temporary Act for more than five months; and if they should adjourn without entering into a consideration of the subject, before the next Session of Parliament the Act will have expired altogether. Now, my Lords, as to the value of the experience we have had of that temporary Act, I think I shall be able to satisfy your Lordships by a few figures—I think I shall be able to satisfy you—that the experience of that Act has not been unimportant. A short time ago, I moved for a return which has been laid on your Lordships' table, and is numbered 147 in the present Session—for the purpose of showing the quantities of all corn, meal, flour, &c., imported into the United Kingdom since the 1st of March; the period when the temporary duty was revived, together with the amount of duty received upon such corn; and also the average weekly price of all descriptions of corn since the 1st of February, 1848. Now, in the first place, my Lords, I shall call attention to the fact, that in the period of eleven weeks which have elapsed under the operation of a duty of from 7*s.* to 9*s.* a quarter, there have been imported and brought into consumption, 993,348 quarters of foreign corn. Of those there were 198,000 odd hundreds, or say 200,000 quarters, which, having been imported before the 1st of March, did not pay any duty; leaving thus about 800,000 quarters which have paid duty in the space of eleven weeks subsequently to the 11th of March. The sum paid as duty upon those 800,000 quarters amounted to 127,930*l.* Now, my Lords, supposing that in the first instance we take the amount only of the corn which paid duty within the space of the eleven weeks, omitting all consideration of that which was previously imported free, and assuming that it afforded a fair average of the consumption of foreign corn, we find it paying to the revenue of the country within the space of eleven weeks a sum of 127,000*l.*, so that, on the same scale, the annual receipt by the revenue would be about 604,760*l.* And if you take, as I contend you may fairly take, into consideration the other fifth which was imported and brought into consumption, but which, having been shipped in time, was admitted free of duty, it will give you no less than 755,947*l.* additional revenue in the year, for the sum which would have been received for duty within the eleven weeks, would have been, had the exempted fifth been paid for, 159,000*l.* Now, my Lords, it is to the financial part of the question that I desire to draw your Lordships' attention; because here is a duty paid into the coffers of the Exchequer, not exciting any discontent or dissatisfaction amongst any set of people, not aggravating the price of the food of the people, but bringing into the revenue, at a period when there is a great and serious defalcation in the revenue—without complaint—without distress—without difficulty—a large sum of money, and which, too, is mainly paid, not by the consumer, but by the foreign importer—a sum of nearly 750,000*l.* sterling annually; and a sum which you are about—unless Parliament interpose within the present Session—to throw away. This is a matter, my Lords, of sufficient importance, I am sure, to justify me in calling the attention of Her Majesty's Ministers to. And it is a sufficient excuse for me, I should hope, if I feel compelled to place before your Lordships some figures in detail. I want to show your Lordships, not only that this duty has been realised, but that it has been paid without aggravating the prices of provisions to the people of the country. I asked, my Lords, for returns of the average prices of all provisions imported into this market since the 1st of February, 1848. Your Lordships are aware, there was only a nominal duty payable until the

1st of March, when the 7*s.* duty on wheat came into operation. Now, your Lordships might naturally expect that when the duty came into operation, there would be somewhat of a corresponding rise in the price of the foreign corn; and that, as the period approached for the levying of the duty, the price of corn would be gradually rising in anticipation of that event. Now, I find by those returns, that in the month of February, 1848, the price of wheat, so far from rising, fell from 51*s.* 2*d.* to 50*s.* 2*d.*; barley was at 30*s.* 9*d.* in the first and last weeks of the month; oats rose from 20*s.* 7*d.* to 20*s.* 8*d.*; rye fell from 32*s.* 6*d.* to 30*s.* 3*d.*, beans from 38*s.* 5*d.* to 38*s.*, and peas from 42*s.* 9*d.* to 41*s.* 7*d.* What, then, was the effect of imposing a duty of 7*s.* a quarter upon wheat, and a corresponding duty upon other descriptions of grain? In the week preceding the re-imposition of the duty, the price of wheat was 50*s.* 2*d.*; in the second week, after the revival of the duty, the price continued the same, although the importer, before he came into the market, had to pay a duty of 7*s.* out of the 50*s.* 2*d.* I do not take the first week of the imposition of the duty, as that was a broken week. During the following week, the price of barley had fallen from 30*s.* 9*d.* to 30*s.* 4*d.*, of oats from 20*s.* 8*d.* to 20*s.* 2*d.*, of beans from 38*s.* to 36*s.* 2*d.*, and of peas from 41*s.* 7*d.* to 39*s.*; while the only increase was in rye, the price of which in the last week of February was 30*s.* 3*d.*, and in the second week of March, 33*s.* 3*d.* I may add, that during the whole period for which the reimposed duties have been in operation, from either the 1st of February or the 1st of March, down to the 11th of May—the latest period to which the return extended—the price of all these articles, so far from rising, has fallen, although only to a trifling extent. Surely, then, my Lords, I am justified in saying, that that amount of duty has been levied without being the cause of any increase of prices, and that it has been gained to your revenue at the expense wholly of the foreign owner or importer. Well, then, another matter remains to be considered. Has the effect been to discourage the importer? And has this duty prevented the introduction of the same quantity of corn subsequently to its imposition that came in before? If the quantity imported since the 1st of March, independently of that for which no duty was paid, be less in proportion than that which was imported before; if the importation be declining, I must admit that it would be a fair inference that the duty had acted as a discouragement. But so far is that from being the case, if you compare the four first weeks after the imposition of the duty with the last four to which the returns are made up, you will find that, so far from there being any diminution in the importation, a very considerable increase has taken place. In the first four weeks there were 97,278 quarters of corn taken into consumption, being an average of 24,319 quarters a week. In the last four weeks there were 141,541 quarters, giving an average of 35,985 quarters a week. The amount of duty paid on the corn imported in the first four weeks, was 12,444*l.* In the last four weeks it was 46,689*l.*, being at the rate on the average of from 680,000*l.* to 750,000*l.* a year, and the receipt of that revenue has not deranged by one halfpenny the price of corn; so that the cost has fallen entirely upon either the foreign producer or the importer; whilst, so far from checking the introduction of foreign corn, there is actually at the present moment an increased importation. Now, my Lords, this is the state of things on which I wish, not indeed to make any Motion, although as a matter of form, and to comply with the rules of your Lordships' House, I shall conclude with a Motion, for I shall move that those returns be continued up to the next period. But to what I wish to direct attention—for I think it is the duty of Her Majesty's Government at this period of the Session, and in the present state of the financial affairs of the country, to look to it—I wish to call the attention of the Government and of the other House of Parliament to this matter, for unless they interpose with some step before the 1st of February next, this large amount of duty will be wholly lost to the revenue, which is suffering depression of a serious nature already, and it will be lost without conferring any corresponding advantage upon any human being. I may be asked, what do I suggest? I may be told, that if it should be found there will be a loss, it will be time enough next Session to retrace our steps. But I pray your Lordships to bear this in mind: there should be a greater introduction of foreign corn for public consumption in the winter months of November, December, and January, than at any other period of the year. But, with the prospect of the duty of 7*s.* being taken off suddenly on the 1st of February next, it is quite clear that, so far as the imposition of the duty goes, you are placing a direct impediment, by the present condition of the law, in the way of the introduction of foreign corn during the winter months previous to that period, and an inducement is held out to the holders of foreign corn to hold it back, and to refrain from importing it until a time when it will be less required in this country, but when it will be subject to a smaller duty on importation. I am quite aware that no Motion on this subject can well be made in your Lordships' House, or, at all events, no Bill introduced; but I desire the Government, who are charged with the responsibility of the finances of this great country, seriously to consider whether it would not be in accordance with sound policy, and with their own sense of public duty, not that a permanent alteration of the law should now take place on so exciting and important a question as this, but that a short Bill should be introduced for the purpose of continuing the existing duties as they now stand for a period of five or six months, so as to enable Parliament, on reassembling next year, deliberately and candidly to determine, with an experience not of three months only, but of a complete year, whether the inconvenience of the imposition of a duty to a trifling extent will not be more than counterbalanced by the financial advantage of receiving three quarters of a million of money. I must be permitted to say that, even if such a Bill were extended to a greater period than that which I have suggested, as leaving to Parliament the means of judging dispassionately on this subject, I do not think that the Government could justly be taunted on either side of the House with any inconsistency or dereliction of their avowed principles. For, though it is true that, as against the corn law as it stood in 1846, the present Government supported the measure for the prospective and entire abolition of the corn duties, I cannot forget that up to that period the doctrine always maintained by the Whig Government was, that the importation of corn and grain was a legitimate subject for the imposition of duties with a view to revenue; and a 7*s.* or 8*s.* duty was more than once contemplated by the Whig Government as their own proposal. Though, for various reasons, with which I will not trouble your Lordships, I am of opinion that the operation of the sliding-scale was more advantageous than the imposition of a fixed duty, more especially because it afforded the opportunity of doing away with the duty, for the relief of the consumer, when prices were high; yet, as between a fixed duty of 8*s.*, and a duty fluctuating as at present between 10*s.* and 4*s.*, I do not see that there is any such difference in point of effect as can justly subject the Government to the slightest charge of inconsistency, if they uphold a continuance of the existing duties. I have called your Lordships' attention to this subject, in order to afford Parliament the fullest opportunity of considering what should be the principle of their permanent legislation on this important subject, and to give the Government also an opportunity of stating the course of policy they intend to adopt.

EARL GREY confessed that he had heard with a great deal of surprise, and also with a great deal of satisfaction, the speech of his noble Friend, because the House would observe that the object of that speech was to the effect that a duty levied on corn, not for the purpose of protection, but for the sake of revenue—that a duty approximating, as his noble Friend observed, more to a fixed duty than to the sliding-scale—that a duty of this description, which, he said, did not raise the price of corn to the consumer, but would produce revenue—was a scheme attended with advantage. Still, he was bound to say, that he thought the facts on which his noble Friend founded his conclusion, were a little too limited to justify it. His noble Friend had omitted to take into consideration many more circumstances and facts than could be witnessed within the last few weeks; and on his noble Friend's short experience of some months, it was absolutely impossible to found any sound opinion whatever. His noble Friend was entirely in error in believing that, when the Act of 1846 was passed, deferring the period when free trade was to take place, that was a course justified on the ground of the measure being an experimental one. In the whole course of the debates on the question, that proposition was justified on totally different grounds. It was justified on the ground of making a gradual preparation for the change to come, and of letting down the farmer as easily as possible.

The DUKE of RICHMOND: Letting down the farmer!

EARL GREY: He was not using his own expression, because he contended, and always had contended, that it would be better for the farmer if the change had been made complete at once; but the object was to make the transition gradual. He repeated, that he did not think that the facts stated by his noble Friend made out his case; but if they did, he (Earl Grey) asked their Lordships to whom was the country indebted for not at the present moment having a law which, according to his noble Friend's statement, would have been attended with such great advantage? It was most true, as his noble Friend had stated, that it was a doctrine maintained by many Gentlemen with whom he (Earl Grey) was connected, and a doctrine he had himself maintained in the other House of Parliament, that a moderate fixed duty on corn, without raising the price to the consumer, would be productive of considerable revenue, and be an advantageous measure. But how was this argument invariably met? It was observed—" What! would you have a tax on the food of the people?—that is indefensible. You may have a corn law for protection, but to have a corn law for revenue is an injustice and outrage;" and to that Parliament was called on, and successfully, not to agree. It was maintained that they had no right to raise a revenue from the food of the people; and the duty repealed in 1846 was a duty which practically did not raise any revenue of consequence in the great majority of years, though it undoubtedly did in some few years, but it had the most material effect in raising the price of corn when it otherwise would have been dear, and of depressing the price of corn when it otherwise would have been low. By the law repealed in 1846 the duty on corn at the present moment would have been a perfectly prohibitory duty. It was against that state of things that they—the opponents of that law—contended; and, according to his noble Friend's own showing, they did perfectly right; for, by getting a corn law which approximated to a fixed duty, they did not raise the price of corn, or injure the farmer. Therefore, according to his noble Friend's own showing, they justly objected to the law in existence in 1846; and if there were not at this moment in force a permanent law for raising a revenue by a duty on corn—supposing that to be a good thing—the blame rested with the noble Lord and his political friends. At the same time he (Earl Grey) must disclaim being supposed to think that it could be assumed that the imposition of a fixed duty would have been the best course of proceeding. Sometime ago he did believe, and still believed, that such a course would then have been the best to be adopted; but now—not speaking for his Colleagues, but expressing his own individual opinion—he, for one, could conceive no course so much to be deprecated as, after all the agitation on this subject, and after the settlement come to with such full consideration and discussion in 1846, Parliament once more throwing into doubt what was to be the permanent law on this most exciting subject, by passing a temporary Bill of the kind suggested. He concluded by expressing his earnest hope and confident belief that nothing would induce Parliament to depart from the settlement effected in 1846.

The DUKE of RICHMOND said, that if the Exchequer were very good, the noble Earl might have been justified in making so magnificent a speech; but as the Government was going to pay 500,000*l.* for immigration to the West Indies, the extension of the existing corn duties for another year would provide them with the money. The Government had proposed an additional income-tax, which they were not able to carry; how, then, were they to supply a daily losing revenue? His noble Friend had pointed out a way, if they only would not care about the ridiculous free-trade nonsense of the Anti-Corn-Law League and Mr. Cobden, who appeared never to have agreed with them since they carried out his plans. The noble Lord (Earl Grey) had alluded to the agitation on the question of the corn law; but did the noble Lord think the farmers of England would allow themselves to be "let down," as the noble Lord said, though he observed that it was not his own expression? There was a prospect of a good harvest abroad, and the very moment foreign corn came in next year there would be agitation on the part of the farmers, who would be driven to join any set of men in refusing to pay taxes, as that would force the Government to the adoption of some such measure as that suggested by his noble Friend (Lord Stanley). He should never forget the scandalous manner in which the present corn law had been carried, namely, by the desertion of a great body of those men who, during their lives, had always thitherto been for protection, and by the aid of many noble Lords in that House, who voted against their own opinions. The House of Lords had lowered itself by its conduct in 1846 in the estimation of the great body of the people of England; and if the House did not mind what it was about, it never would regain the confidence of the people.

Subject at an end.

CASUAL POOR.

Lord BROUGHAM referred to certain circumstances that had recently taken place in Hertfordshire connected with the administration of the poor-law. Persons coming on their way to London, and wishing to have a little accommodation on the road, had been received into the workhouses and allowed to receive supper, breakfast, and a night's lodging. Some friends of his had inquired into this proceeding, and had expressed astonishment at the arrangement, as it was contrary to the principle of the poor-law, and seemed like using the workhouses as inns. This abuse was of an alarming nature, for in one week nearer 300 than 200, and in another week nearly 400 persons had been so accommodated, and the strongest suspicion existed in Hertfordshire that those persons had come up to town for no good purpose, for all this took place previous to last Monday; and the inhabitants there thought it very hard that they should be paying for people coming up to disturb the peace of London. He understood that the facts bore out this suspicion to some extent, and he mentioned the matter in order that some inquiry might be made into it.

The Duke of RICHMOND said, it often happened that poor men travelling with their wives and children—sometimes four or five children—stopped at night unable to move. The overseers were liable to be indicted if they did not, under such circumstances, yield them the necessary assistance. Now, he should be sorry if any clause were introduced to set free the overseers from that responsibility. He thought, however, that the burden of granting these reliefs should be thrown on the union, and not on the particular parish in which the suffering poor were found. This suggestion he merely threw out for their Lordships' consideration.

Lord BROUGHAM observed, it was true that the poor, under these circumstances, could only get their supper and the use of a fire and their beds for the night—not their breakfasts in the morning, unless they worked two hours; but the advantages which they did receive were well worth their acceptance, and if they were not willing to work for their breakfasts, it could scarcely be said that they had any claim to that meal.

Lord REDESDALE thought that giving such people fire and beds, and supper, in the parish workhouse, was the worst way in which they could be relieved. The best way would be, not to allow casual poor to be received into the parish workhouses, but to provide for them elsewhere.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, June 16, 1848.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—1° Farmers' Estate Society (Ireland); Sale of Bread, &c.; Sunday Trading (Metropolis).

2° Prisons.

Reported.—Appeals on Civil Bills (Dublin).

3° and passed;—Commons Inclosure.

Petitions Presented. By Mr. Cobden, and other Hon. Members, from an immense Number of Places, for an Extension of the Elective Franchise.—By Mr. Jackson, from Audley (Stafford), and several other Places, for a Better Observance of the Lord's Day.—By Mr. A. Oswald, from the Parish of Girvan, Ayrshire, in favour of the Places of Worship Sites (Scotland) Bill.—By Sir R. H. Inglis, from the Deanery of Hartisnere, in the Diocese of Norwich, respecting the Tithes Commutation Act.—By Sir Edward Buxton, from Sturge Town, and its Vicinity, in the Island of Jamaica, against the Present Scheme of African Emigration.—By the Earl of Lincoln, from the Directors of the Chamber of Commerce, Glasgow, for a Differential Duty in favour of Colonial Sugar.—By Mr. Morgan, from Kilmore, Wexford, for an Alteration of the Law of Landlord and Tenant (Ireland).—By Mr. Home Drummond, from the Parochial Board of Kirkmichael, against the Registering Births, &c. (Scotland) Bill (1847).—By Mr. A. Oswald, from the Commissioners of Supply of Ayrshire, for a Completion of the Survey of Scotland.

THE BOROUGH OF DERBY.

Mr. STAFFORD moved—

"That Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a New Writ for the electing of two Burgesses to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Derby, in the room of the Right Hon. Edward Strutt and the Hon. Edward Frederick Leveson Gower, whose Election had been determined void."

Mr. HUME thought, after the proceeding of last night in the case of the borough of Leicester, when the hon. Member was only supported by five Members, after a long speech and a debate of nearly three hours, it really would be advisable to postpone the present Motion, at least till Monday, when the whole subject would again come on.

The House divided: Ayes 36; Noes 89: Majority 53.

List of the Ayes.

Anstey, T. C.
Bankes, G.
Bruce, C. L. C.
Buck, L. W.
Christopher, R. A.
Christy, S.

Codrington, Sir W.
Collins, W.
Colvile, C. R.
Disraeli, B.
Dodd, G.
Fuller, A. E.
Godson, R.
Goulburn, right hon. H.
Grogan, E.
Heathcote, Sir W.
Henley, J. W.
Herries, rt. hon. J. C.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Lygon, hon. Gen.
Mahon, Visct.
Masterman, J.
Newdegate, C. N.
O'Brien, Sir L.
Pakington, Sir J.
Robinson, G. R.
Sandars, G.
Sidney, Ald.
Smyth, J. G.
Sotheron, T. H. S.
Spooner, R.
Stephenson, R.
Stuart, J.
Thornhill, G.
Trollope, Sir J.
Vyvyan, Sir R. R.

TELLERS.

Stafford, A.
Baillie, H. J.

List of the NOES.

Adair, H. E.
Adair, R. A. S.
Adare, Visct.
Bagshaw, J.
Baring, H. B.
Bernal, R.
Bouverie, hon. E. P.
Bowles, Adm.
Boyle, hon. Col.
Bright, J.
Brotherton, J.
Bunbury, E. H.
Burke, Sir T. J.
Buxton, Sir E. N.
Callaghan, D.
Cardwell, E.
Carew, W. H. P.
Clifford, H. M.
Cobden, R.
Cochrane, A.D.R.W.B.
Cockburn, A. J. E.
Coke, hon. E. K.
Crawford, W. S.
Davie, Sir H. R. F.
Divett, E.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Duff, G. S.
Duncan, G.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Ellice, rt. hon. E.
Estcourt, J. B. B.
Evans, Sir De L.
Fagan, W.
Fordyce, A. D.
Fox, W. J.
Frewen, C. H.
Glyn, G. C.
Grace, O. D. J.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Grey, R. W.
Guest, Sir J.
Gwyn, H.
Hastie, A.
Hawes, B.
Henry, A.
Herbert, rt. hon. S.
Heywood, J.
Hill, Lord M.
Hood, Sir A.
Jackson, W.
Jervis, Sir J.
Lincoln, Earl of
Lushington, C.
Macnaghten, Sir E.
Mangles, R. D.
Martin, C. W.
Matheson, Col.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Milner, W. M. E.
Mitchell, T. A.
Molesworth, Sir W.
Monsell, W.
Morgan, H. K. G.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Mowatt, F.
Parker, J.
Pattison, J.
Pendarves, E. W. W.
Peto, S. M.
Pugh, D.
Renton, J. C.
Ricardo, O.
Russell, F. C. H.
Simeon, J.
Somerville, rt.hn.SirW.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Stuart, Lord D.
Sullivan, M.
Thompson, Col.
Thompson, G.
Thornely, T.
Towneley, C.
Tynte, Col.
Vane, Lord H.
Vivian, J. H.
Wall, C. B.
Wilson, M.
Wood, rt. hon. Sir C.
Wrightson, W. B.

TELLERS.

Hume, J.
Bowring, Dr.

DISTRESS IN THE WEST INDIES.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL: I will now, Mr. Speaker, proceed to make that statement which I promised to the House before the holidays I would make on this day with respect to the West Indian distress. I mean to close my present address by a mere Motion of form, and to propose that on Monday next the House should resolve itself into Committee of the whole House for the purpose of considering the propositions which I shall this day have the honour of stating to the House. Sir, in considering the present state of the West Indies, and generally of those parts of the British dominions in which sugar is produced, although I wish to enter as little into argument as possible, I think it will be necessary to take some general view of the past course of our legislation. I am confirmed in my opinion that it would not be sufficient to speak of the Act of 1846, by the opinion of a gentleman whose views are adverse in many respects to mine, but who is a person of great experience, and who has paid attention for many years to this subject. I speak of Mr. John Innes. In answer to question 13,384 before the Select Committee on sugar and coffee planting—

> "Do you believe that the change of the sugar duties which took place in 1846 has materially affected the condition of the West Indies?—I entertain the opinion that much more has been attributed to that Act as regards the past than can fairly be ascribed to it. I hold that the Act having passed in 1846 it is impossible that there can have been any great accession of sugar produced hitherto in consequence of that Act; but I think, prospectively, it will operate most injuriously."

Question 13,385:—

> "You do not believe that it would be fair to attribute the state of distress which notoriously exists in the West Indies to the operation of the Act of 1846, but you trace it back to causes which existed before that?—I believe if the Act of 1846 had never passed, the price of sugar would have been nearly as low last year as it was; but I consider that the Act of 1846, having entirely destroyed confidence in West India property, has deprived the planter of support, and diminished his power to supply sugar."

Now, Sir, my opinion is this, that the distress which has existed of late in the West Indies, taken by itself, resembles many cases of distress which existed during the continuance of monopoly and protection; and what we have to consider is rather the general legislation that has prevailed, than the distress which exists at the present moment. Sir, there are two periods and two great acts by which the present state of the West Indies has been materially affected. The first of these was the Act by which the negro population was made free. Now, Sir, I consider that was a great act of humanity and of justice. I think it was due to the people living under the British Crown but in the miserable condition of slaves; and I believe if that Act had not been passed we should have had a series of insurrections and disturbances which would have been fatal to the prosperity of the West Indians. Therefore, Sir, in anything that I may say to-day, I wish rather to take pride to myself for having been a party to that great Act of Emancipation; and I think that the gift of 20,000,000*l.*, made at the same time cheerfully by the Parliament and people of this country, showed that, however great was their abhorrence of slavery, Parliament and the people were disposed, as far as they were concerned, to make a sacrifice for the purpose of preventing such distress and ruin as must have arisen had that Act been withheld. But, Sir, it was not to be expected that a great act of that kind—freedom given in a very short time to 800,000 human beings who had previously existed in a state of slavery—it was not to be expected that that transition from slavery to freedom could be effected without very considerable inconveniences; and I think we may be well satisfied if those inconveniences did not exist to such a degree as entirely to disturb and overthrow the state of society as it then existed. I think it speaks well for those who had been proprietors of slaves in the West Indies—it speaks well for the negroes themselves—that that great change was accomplished with so little disturbance as has taken place. But, Sir, in carrying that Act into effect, there were some measures adopted which although they were supported by public feeling at the time, and although I believe they met with the concurrence of Parliament, did place additional difficulties in the way of the West India proprietors. I speak more particularly of the prohibition to import labourers from the coast of Africa. It was believed that it would be impossible to import labour from the coast of Africa without a revival of slavery, and in some degree of the slave trade. So strong was the feeling upon the subject, that I found, when I was in the Colonial Office, that there were very great difficulties in the way of a slight attempt which I made to import Africans from Sierra Leone, and that a measure conceived in a similar spirit of introducing labourers from the East Indies into the Mauritius was obstructed, and in fact rejected, by a vote of this House. Afterwards measures were taken for obtaining a supply of labour of different kinds to the West Indies and Mauritius; but these measures took a considerable time. The introduction of Europeans into the West Indies was said to have entirely failed as a source of supply of labour; the introduction of Coolies has not been attended with any great success; and the various measures adopted for introducing labourers from the coast of Africa required a great deal of correspondence, a great deal of regulation to prevent abuse; and though I believe measures were taken in 1843, and again in 1845, for that purpose, they have not yet had any very signal effect on the supply of labour in the West Indies. Other measures were taken at the same time, to which great objection has been made, but which I think were not fairly liable to those objections—I mean the measures for facilitating contracts for not more than one year with those who engaged themselves as labourers in the West Indies. I think in practice it has been found that contracts made for a longer period, if made on disadvantageous terms to the labourer, were ineffective. The labourer sees others in his neighbourhood having higher wages for the same labour; an attempt is made at compulsory labour, which by the law putting an end to slavery cannot be enforced, and the employer does not gain the benefit he expected from the prolongation of his contract. The other great change to which I wish to allude is the change which took place in 1845 and 1846—the lowering of the colonial duties in 1845; the admission of free-labour sugar; and in 1846 the admission of all foreign sugar at a duty reduced at first from 63*s.* to 21*s.* per cwt., and with a subsequent reduction which, in 1851, was to end in the equalisation of the duty. Now, Sir, if the former measure of the emancipation of the slave population in the West Indies rested on undoubted principles of religion, humanity, and justice, I think that the measure of 1846 rested no less on views of sound policy and of justice to the labouring people of this country. I cannot but think that it was not to be expected, while a scanty supply of sugar only could be obtained from our own possessions, and properties in the West Indies were many of them extravagantly managed, and in such a manner as to obtain for very considerable wages very little return of labour, so that it has been said many of the labourers worked but four days in a week, and for five hours a day—I cannot but think, where that was the case, it would not have been just to the people of this country to withhold from them the power of obtaining so general an article of consumption as sugar at a cheaper rate than it could be furnished by those who were liable to these disadvantages. With regard to the two measures I have mentioned, the general purpose for which they were mainly enacted, may be said to have been completely successful. The main purpose of the Act of 1834 was, as I have stated, to give freedom to 800,000 persons; to place those then living in a condition of slavery in a state of independence, prosperity, and happiness. That object, I think, every one admits has been accomplished. I believe a class of labourers more happy, more in possession of all the advantages and enjoyments of life, than the negro population of the West Indies, does not exist. That great object has been accomplished by the Act of 1834. So likewise with respect to the Act of 1846, of which the object was to obtain a cheaper supply of sugar with at the same time a diminution of burden to the people of this country—that Act has been completely successful, giving to the consumer in this country an increased supply at a less charge, while at the same time it has increased the revenue derived by the State. I find, Sir, by the return I hold in my hand that the consumption of sugar in 1845 was 244,000 tons; in 1846, it was 261,300 tons; in 1847, it was 290,700 tons. I believe I stated in 1846, when giving an estimate of what might be the probable supply and consumption, that it might reach 290,000 tons. It has exceeded that amount, and the consumption is still increasing. If I look to the revenue, I find that the duties on sugar, which in 1845 were 3,745,000*l.*, were in 1846 4,050,000*l.*, and in 1847 4,596,000*l.*, showing an increase of revenue in 1847 over 1845 of no less than 851,000*l.* Now, that has been obtained not solely by the Act of 1846, but partly by the diminution of duties in 1845; and it was a consequence generally, not of an increase, but of a reduction of the duties payable by the consumer. In the great object, therefore, of enabling the consumer to buy his sugar cheaper, and that in his little budget of receipts and expenses he might be enabled to have the comfort of consuming an additional quantity of sugar, while at the same time the revenue should be improved, nothing could be more successful than that Act. But, Sir, I have stated what I think were grievances and evils accompanying the Act of 1834; these have accompanied the Act of 1846—evils affecting the proprietors in the West Indies, and certainly producing to a considerable degree that discouragement of which Mr. Innes speaks in the passage I have quoted from his evidence. It is said that the prospect of the speedy abolition of all protecting duties—the equalisation of duties at so short a period, prevents, and in many instances has prevented, any further outlay on sugar estates; and that many of the sugar estates being left out of cultivation for a few months it would require many years before they could again be restored to cultivation. It is said, and I believe with truth, that with regard to a large quantity of the sugar that is brought into this market, there is an advantage given to the foreign producer by encouraging him to send to this market an article of a better quality, while the articles of inferior quality are sent to the Continental markets. Several witnesses have stated that the difference in point of value of sugar, which is partly manufactured by claying and other processes, and the ordinary muscovado sugar, is no less than 6*s.* per cwt. It is obvious that it is the interest of the foreign producer, while there is a discriminating and differential duty, to send to this market the best article he can make at the lower duty, at which he can compete with the greatest advantage with those who pay a duty which is still lower than he pays. If the duties were all equal, it might be the same thing to him to send either the superior or the inferior article to this and the Continental market; but as long as there is the difference of duty it is a manifest advantage to him to send the superior article to the British market. At the same time with regard to rum, there is this disadvantage to the West India producer, first, that the differential duty at present kept up with reference to British spirits is an unfair advantage to distillers in this country. Sir, the results of these two great measures, while they are in their main principles not only defensible, but, as I think, deserving of support and commendation, at present place the producer in the West Indies, or parts of the West Indies, in a most disadvantageous position. I have frequently spoken upon this subject with regard to the great principles which I thought ought to be maintained; but at the same time, with regard to the operation of these Acts, I think, considering the great importance it is that the experiment of 1834, the transition of so many persons from slavery to freedom, should be successful—the great importance it is of giving every fair opportunity to the competition of free labour as against slave labour—I think Government is bound to propose any measure which they think they can justly recommend for the purpose of counteracting the evils which those who are now in a distressed condition call upon us to remedy. I will state, then, what we have in contemplation, without, as I have said, going into any arguments on the subject. I rather wish to defer discussion on the propositions I now make till Monday next. I merely wish to put the House in possession of what our views are with respect to those various circumstances. Sir, with regard to the first question, as depending on the adjuncts of the Act of 1834, by which labour was made difficult to be procured by the West Indies, much has already been done of late years to diminish that difficulty. The present state of the case is, that labourers may be introduced from any British possession in Africa, with only this provision, that there should be an officer on board the vessel who shall take care that there are no transactions resembling the purchase of slaves or the slave trade, and that the person who emigrates to the West Indies should go there with his own consent. But there is another measure which was adopted by my noble Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies with respect to the liberated Africans. Formerly the liberated Africans were sent to Sierra Leone, or some other possession in the neighbourhood, and the West Indians derived no advantage from the labour of those persons; at the same time they were maintained at a very considerable expense in a state of idleness and barbarism in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone. My noble Friend has now provided that the liberated Africans should be sent, under certain restrictions and conditions, to the West Indies, for the purpose of being there employed as labourers. With respect, however, to this question of immigration, I have already stated that I think the obstacle and difficulty—the suspicion there was in this country that the slave trade might be revived under the pretence of immigration—the fear that slaves should be compelled to work in the West Indies—retarded for a longer period than was quite fair or just to the West India proprietors, the immigration into the West Indies. Entertaining this view, therefore, we propose to do more than we should have done had the question been from the beginning settled in favour of the West Indies, and a free import of labourers continued from 1835 to the present time. We propose, therefore, either to make advances on the security of the colonial revenues, or guarantee loans to be raised by the colonies for the purpose of giving a bounty on the importation of immigrants into the West Indies. We propose that the sums so granted or advanced should not exceed 500,000*l.* in addition to the sum this House has already consented to advance, 160,000*l.*, for that purpose. With reference to contracts for service, and with regard to the question of vagrancy and squatting, my noble Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department has taken those subjects into his earnest consideration, and is perfectly willing to agree to anything that is reasonable on that point. But, in fact, there is very great difficulty in framing laws on the subject; any measures the colonial legislatures themselves may think practically beneficial to them, that would not imply compulsory labour or slavery, will have the ready attention and willing consent of my noble Friend. I come now to the other question, namely, the question of the Act of 1846. I have stated that complaints have been made of the too rapid operation of the Act, and likewise that there is one kind of sugar which obtains advantages under the present classification of duties which it ought not to have. Now, in considering that subject, I must say, at the outset, that I do not think it would be fair to the British consumer to impose anything like a differential duty of 10*s.* to last for a period of six years, or any longer time, for the purpose of reviving industry and prosperity in the West Indies. I think the consideration of the large tax imposed on the people of this country—the consideration that the labourer in this country, who is giving the whole of his industry for ten or twelve hours a day, already pays heavily for his tea, coffee, and sugar, would preclude such a course. To impose on him a duty, which may be exaggerated at an estimate of 2,900,000*l.* a year, but which still must be a duty of 2,000,000*l.* — ["Oh, oh!"] Well, I am ready to take it at 1,000,000*l.* or 1,500,000*l.*; but, as I said, to impose on the British consumer such a heavy tax for a long period, would be a hardship upon him, which I am not ready to inflict. I look, therefore, in another direction. With regard to the experience of late years, in reference to many articles to which I need not now advert, with respect to which the duties have been lessened, or in regard to which, without any lessening of the duties, there has been a much greater production, and, therefore, a lowering of the price, we have found such an increased consumption, that the revenue has not fallen, while the consumer has been largely benefited. I look, therefore, in that direction, and not in the direction of an increase of the duties now existing, which would result in the total breaking up of the hope of the British people that the duties on sugar are about to be reduced. I look to the hope of a large consumption for any modification of the Act of 1846. I will take the liberty of referring to a paper which was laid before the Select Committee on Sugar and Coffee Planting, and which was addressed by Mr. Benjamin B. Greene, of Austin-friars, to the noble Lord the Member for Lynn. It gives an account of the increase of consumption after the lowering of the duty, and it then goes on to say:—

> "In 1825 an increase of 7*s*. per cwt. in price caused a decrease in consumption of 16,000 tons;
>
> | | Tons. |
> |---|---|
> | In 1826 a fall of 7*s*. 11*d*. increased consumption ... ... | 25,900 |
> | In 1827 a rise of 5*s*. 2*d*. diminished... | 12,500 |
> | In 1828 a fall of 4*s*. 1*d*. increased ... | 17,000 |
> | In 1830 a further fall of 5*s*. 2*d*. ... | 12,400 |
> | In 1836 a rise of 7*s*. 5*d*. diminished ... | 21,500 |
> | In 1837 a fall of 6*s*. 3*d*. increased ... | 22,800 |
> | In 1839 a rise of 5*s*. 6*d*. diminished ... | 9,500 |
> | In 1840 a further rise of 10*s*. 4*d*. ... | 11,800 |
> | In 1841 a fall of 8*s*. 8*d*. increased ... | 23,100 |
>
> The last three years, however, namely 1845, 1846, and 1847, present the most remarkable proof of all, that diminished price is sure to be followed by increased consumption. In 1845 prices fell 11*s*. 9*d*. per cwt., and consumption increased 38,600 tons. In 1846, such was the stimulus already given, that without any material alteration in price, consumption rose still further 17,300 tons. In 1847 a further fall of 6*s*. again added to the consumption 29,400 tons; making in the three years an increase of no less than 85,000 tons per annum upon the consumption of 1844."

Now, I think that this increased consumption of 85,000 tons per annum is so remarkable a proof of the powers of consumption in this country, and of the fact that consumption is limited and checked by the duty, that it affords an encouragement to try a further experiment in the way of reduction of duty. What I propose, therefore, is, that the duty on colonial sugar shall be reduced after the 5th of July, in the present year, to 13*s*., and afterwards be further reduced a shilling a year till the duty reaches 10*s*. I propose that the duty on the ordinary foreign muscovado sugar shall remain according to the Act of 1846, but I shall propose a new distinctive duty with regard to the sugar called "brown clayed sugar," or of a quality equal thereto, which, for the year ending the 5th of July, 1849, shall remain at the present duty of 20*s*., and shall then be reduced 1*s*. 6*d*. a year till it reaches 10*s*., on the 5th of July, 1854. The House will see, therefore, that the duty on colonial sugar will fall instantly to 13*s*. in 1848, 12*s*. in 1849, and 11*s*. in 1850; and that after these three years there will be a permanent duty of 10*s*. on colonial sugar. The foreign sugar in the same way, will fall 1*s*. 6*d*. every year until 1854, when after a period of six years, the duty will be 10*s*. As some hon. Gentleman may not have heard me, I will read to the House the proposed scale of duties:—

Year ending July 5.	Foreign. Brown Clayed.		Foreign. Musc.		Colonial Muscovado.	
	s.	*d*.	*s*.	*d*.	*s*.	*d*.
1849	20	0	18	6	13	0
1850	18	6	17	0	12	0
1851	17	0	15	6	11	0
1852	15	6	14	0	10	0
1853	14	6	13	0	10	0
1854	13	0	12	0	10	0
Equal ...	10	0	10	0	10	0

There will then not be the temptation to introduce these superior classes of sugar rather than the inferior kinds. It will be a new distinction as regards them, and the question which will be kept in view will be rather to reduce the duty on all sugars to 10*s*. than to maintain a permanent difference. Of course such a change in the duties will require corresponding changes in refined and double refined sugars, and also in white clayed sugar and molasses. I have said, that complaints have been made on the subject of rum, and that the differential duty on rum was still declared to be an injustice on the producers of rum in the West Indies It will be in the recollection of the House, that last year my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed that a differential duty of 6*d*. should be imposed on rum. My right hon. Friend found, however, that there would be great difficulty in carrying that reduction, and he consented to the substitution of 9*d.* for 6*d.*, at the same time declaring that his opinion was a strong one that 6*d.* was sufficient. Now, in the Committee on Sugar and Coffee Planting, evidence was taken on this subject from a gentleman who had the merit of being impartial, while he possessed considerable knowledge and experience. I allude to Mr. John Wood, the Chairman of the Board of Excise. He said it was not for him to decide what the duty should be, but that if he were called on to decide, after hearing all the arguments which had been adduced, he should be disposed to say that 4*d.* was quite sufficient for a differential duty. Now, I think that after that statement made by a person in whom the greatest confidence may be placed, we cannot propose any greater amount than 4*d.* as a differential duty on rum. I think, at least, it will be admitted, while we act with a regard for the general interests of the empire, and find ourselves placed in difficulties in respect to the West Indian proprietors and proprietors of establishments elsewhere, that it would not do to say that we could not listen to the West Indian proprietors, on account of the interests established in this country. There is one question connected with this reduction of duty, which will, I believe, make it necessary for us to go backwards with reference to a permission granted a short time ago. According to the scale of duties proposed by my right hon. Friend, with reference to the introduction of sugar into breweries, there was no advantage gained by the introduction, unless the prices of malt rose very high. But with a reduced duty of 10*s.* there would be an obvious advantage given to the use of sugar in breweries. Now, we could hardly place all parties on an equality in this respect without a vexatious interference with the business of a brewer, and an inquisition into the concerns of the 40,000 establishments which are carried on for the purpose of brewing. I believe, therefore, it will be necessary to withdraw the permission given to use sugar in breweries. With regard to distilleries, however, I do not think it will be necessary to make any change. I have now given a general outline of the measure, and of the changes which we propose to make. I trust the House will bear in mind, in any proposition that they have to consider on this subject, whether the proposition of the Government or of any other party, that the principles of the two Acts to which I have referred ought to be kept steadily in view. No desire to assist the West India proprietors ought to induce us in any way to impair that great Act for the abolition of slavery which it is the honour of this country to have carried into effect. I speak, of course, with regard to the importation of labour into the West Indies, and I have heard of plans according to which the purchase of negroes on the coast of Africa would be considered meritorious acts on the part of some of the legislatures in the West Indies. To any such measures as these I shall offer a decided opposition. But, next to keeping in view the principles of the Abolition Act, I think that we should keep steadily in sight the great object of the Act of 1846, which was to get sugar as cheap as it could be obtained consistently with the object of keeping up the revenue. In what I have proposed, I have not lost sight of that principle. I should very much lament if the House this year, when great distress prevails among the people of the country, and it has been thought necessary to maintain no less an amount of taxation than the country suffered in former years—I say, I should much lament if, for the sake of any interest, we increase the price of any article of consumption, and thereby injure the consumer. I have now stated what the proposition of the Government will be. I think it will be very convenient if Gentlemen will allow me to circulate, which I hope to do in the course of to-morrow, the scale which I propose as the altered scale of duties, and I shall then propose that on Monday we go into a Committee of the whole House for the purpose of considering the Act of 1846. I shall conclude by moving that the Act 9 and 10 Victoria be now read.

Sir R. H. INGLIS would have thought it impossible, if he had not heard it, for such a statement to have been made by the noble Lord, without one passing reference to what he believed to be the deep-seated feeling of that House and of the country. The question before the House was not confined to the question whether the people of this country should have cheap sugar or not, but whether that sugar should be stained with the blood of the slave. He confessed that he had not thought it possible that the whole of that question could have been kept carefully out of sight. It was true that the First Minister of the Crown told them that he desired to preserve intact the Act of 1834; but did he preserve intact the Act of 1807? Was it not almost equally a crime and a sin on our part, if wilfully, and with our eyes open, we did that which we knew necessarily must encourage the slave trade in every other part of the world? He wished everything to be cheap; but the question was whether there were not more important things in heaven and earth than cheap sugar? We were virtually returning to an abandoned system; and he grieved to think that it should be left to the Prime Minister, who bore so distinguished a part in the struggles which followed the Act of 1807, to come forward and propose a measure which practically legalised that in others which we ourselves had felt it our duty, in the sight of God and man, to forsake. Was it possible that, for the sake of a fraction of a penny in the pound, we should be parties to the perpetuation of the slave trade? With regard to the Act of 1834, he must say that he thought the expense of our humanity ought not to be thrown on the West Indies, on whom we at that time forced it. He contended that not merely the sufferings of the people of Africa ought to be regarded, but—though he hardly liked to bring them together in the same sentence—the condition of the white proprietors in the West Indies ought to be considered. There was something almost ridiculous in the proposition of Her Majesty's Government. He had to apologise to the House for rising at all; but he had wished to protest, in the first instance, against any statement from which it appeared to be almost a matter of indifference whether the slave trade was continued or not.

Sir J. PAKINGTON could not refrain from expressing the great pain and disappointment with which he had listened to the speech of the noble Lord. He agreed with the hon. Baronet (Sir R. Inglis) in regretting that the First Minister of the Crown, when speaking of the operation of the Act of 1846, should not have taken notice of the fact that it had given the greatest possible stimulus to slavery and the slave trade; and he must also express the disappointment he felt that the noble Lord was not prepared to take a course which would be satisfactory to the merchants and planters connected with our West India colonies. He did not wonder that the noble Lord should have endeavoured to draw away their attention from the Act of 1848; but he should be able, when the proper time came, to prove that if that Act did not originate the distress now felt by the West India interest, it was at least the cause of a large proportion of it. It was an Act full of injustice towards a large body of our fellow-subjects, and he could see no reason why they should be made to suffer on account of some alleged advantage to the rest of the community. The noble Lord had expressed a hope that the Acts of 1834 and of 1846 would be adhered to by that House. With respect to the Act of 1834, known as the Emancipation Act, he could with sincerity say he had no wish to alter it in the slightest degree; but he must at the same time observe, that the noble Lord himself had virtually departed from the spirit of that Act, and that the whole tendency of recent legislation was to stimulate that slavery which it was the object of the Emancipation Act to put down. So far as the Act of 1846 gave advantages to the consumer, he would support them so far as they were consistent with the fair rights and expectations of the colonists, who were now exposed to dangerous and ruinous competition. He had no idea, however, that the proposition of the noble Lord would be satisfactory to those parties most interested; and in those circumstances he should certainly feel it his duty, when the proper time came, to move an Amendment, the object of which would be to uphold the report of the Committee that had recently closed its labours, and which tended to do justice to our suffering colonies; at the same time to put an end to that legislation that had given so great a stimulus to the slave trade.

Mr. BERNAL hoped the House would forgive him for declaring in the outset, as standing independent of all parties on this subject, that he would not bind himself by any such scale as that now proposed, or, indeed, by any scale whatever, whether coming from the Protectionist or non-Protectionist side of the House; but that he would now, as he had done over and over again, claim, on behalf of the West India colonists, the right to import their produce into the mother country free of all duties whatever. He had always advocated this claim; and so far as God gave him health and strength to maintain the position, he would contend, to the best of his ability, that the West India farmer had as good a right as the Scotch or Yorkshire farmer to import to this country the growth of his soil, free of all duties whatever. He only wished, at present, to guard himself from giving assent to any scale or proposition, let that proposition come from any quarter, either in or out of the House, or from doing anything that in future might prevent him from advocating the doctrine he had just expressed.

Mr. BARKLY expressed his deep regret that the measures of the noble Lord were so utterly insufficient to avert the ruin now hanging over the heads of the West India colonies. Certainly he was not very sanguine as to the result of the noble Lord's deliberations on this subject; and therefore he, for one, was not taken by surprise when he heard that result announced. He was ready to admit that the distress in the West India colonies had been accelerated—probably, even aggravated—by the commercial distress experienced in this country; but he must say, that the measure of 1846 was one of the chief causes of that distress; it had certainly, if it did not originate, consummated the ruin of those colonies. The real object, however, they were met to discuss, was, how they could best, in present circumstances, legislate for the benefit of the colonies; and they had the evidence of the Select Committee lately appointed to guide them—a Committee presided over by the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, who, whatever might be thought of his politics by hon. Gentlemen opposite, was admitted by all to have conducted that inquiry with equal ability and impartiality. That Committee, after long and deliberate inquiry, had recommended an alteration of the differential duties to 10*s.* per cwt. for six years, as the only means of saving the West Indies. Now, he was no admirer of protection—he was ready to admit many of the evils it inflicted; he acknowledged that there were peculiar objections to it in the present state of our West India colonies; but he could not see how that Committee, with the evidence which they had before them, could have come to any other conclusion than that at which they had arrived. The noble Lord at the head of the Government himself did not differ from them as to the principle of the conclusion at which they had arrived. He had admitted that more protection was necessary to the West India colonies, but he was not prepared to carry it out in the way proposed by the Committee. The noble Lord could neither make up his mind to reject or to adopt the conclusions of the Committee. He had no objection to violate his abstract principles just so far as everybody told him would be of no possible utility; but he refused to move an inch further. He would give 7*s.* protection, but 10*s.* was out of the question. He must say, however, that the reasoning of the noble Lord would have been more consistent if he had refused to do anything at all on the subject. If the competition to which the planters had been exposed by the Bill of 1846, were a competition which they could sustain, why interrupt the progress of that measure at all—why suspend their sliding-scale? If on the other hand it never was reasonable to expect their colonies, cultivated by scarce and dear free-labour, to compete with slave-killing countries; if the result of the brief experiment they had tried, had been wide-spread ruin and bankruptcy among all connected with their sugar colonies, of what possible use was it to propose now to try the self-same experiments over again? He contended that any reduction of duty short of attaining the object the noble Lord professed to have in view, was just so much money thrown away. As to the immigration arrangements which were to be made, no one valued them more than he did, but it was evident that to produce any good result must be the work of years; and he would ask how the cultivation of the colonies was to be carried on in the meantime? For any good practical effect which would flow at present to the colonies, the sum of 500,000*l.* proposed for immigration might as well be thrown into the sea. The noble Lord had observed that the country could not afford to pay 3*s.* or 4*s.* per cwt. more for sugar in the shape of increased protection; but he thought the calculation which they ought to make was, how they could best secure for the people of this country a cheap and permanent supply of sugar—not a supply for one or two years only at a cheap rate, but how they were to produce at moderate prices a permanent supply of this necessary of life; and he would ask the noble Lord if he thought they would come nearer that by the extinction of one-third of the production of the British colonies? He certainly did not think that this was a likely way to lower permanently the price of sugar to the community. It might be asked what security was there if this protection were given, that the colonies would be better able to produce cheap sugar at the end of the time than now? Everything depended upon the Colonial Office. He looked on protection merely as a means to an end. If, however, they gave encouragement by proper laws to repress vagrancy and squatting—if they got that support to immigration which they had a right to expect from this country—he had that firm reliance on the enterprise, skill, and energy of his fellow-countrymen connected with the colonies, as to believe that they would be able to beat foreigners out of the market, as they had done before. He knew that the most unfounded allegations had been made on this point in the last debate. Much had been said of their want of skill, and of their deficiency in scientific knowledge in the culture of their estates, and the character of their machinery; but he thought such charges came with an exceeding bad grace after the course of treatment those colonists had undergone. He trusted that the ensuing discussion would be conducted with more candour. He hoped, at any rate, hon. Members would take the trouble to look at the evidence taken before the Committee, and to read the despatches from the Governors on this subject, before repeating these fallacies. Parliament had confiscated their property—let it not libel their characters. He could assure the House it was hard enough to suffer poverty, and social degradation, its usual accompaniment in this country—to find one's future reduced to fewer hundreds per annum than it once was thousands, solely and simply by the legislation of this country; but it was harder still to be blamed for results wholly beyond their control, and to hear every cause but the true one assigned for the ruin which had engulphed West India property, by those who at any rate had no excuse for not knowing better.

MR. BRIGHT must protest against the assumption that no part of our dominions was suffering from distress, except the West Indian colonies. [*Ironical cheers from the Protectionists.*] Hon. Gentleman opposite were quite aware of what was the fact, but they did not acknowledge it. Gentlemen talked as if some extraordinary calamity had befallen the West India colonies, and as if there alone people were suffering extreme distress. Now it so happened, that during the last year the actual production of sugar in the West Indies was greater than it had been for many previous years. The question was one which related simply to the right of the West India planters to require the people of this country to make up for the calamity under which they were suffering. He protested on behalf of such persons as he represented—he protested on behalf of the great body of the people, whose opinion he was certain he was now expressing—against an increase of taxation in the endeavour to revive the industry of the West Indies, which industry could only revive as any other industry would after periods of great distress. It was unnecessary to dwell on the distress of Ireland. That was well known. But if they looked to any branch of industry carried on in England, with the exception of agriculture, they would find that a degree of distress prevailed, which, if brought out in figures, would be greater than any that could be alleged of the West Indies—infinitely greater than any that prevailed among 92½ per cent of the people in the West Indies, such being the proportion of the black population. It was from exact knowledge, and from unfortunate experience, that he was able to state, with respect to the whole cotton-spinning and manufacturing body, that more than one-half of their capital—he spoke not of their fixed but of their floating capital—had been lost within the last two years; first, in consequence of the high price of corn, and, secondly, in consequence of the scarcity of cotton. The result had been to limit the time of work for the operatives to three days per week, and to reduce the income of the working population to half the usual amount. If such were the fact, and if efforts were made on behalf of all the parties interested in the cotton manufacture to have the value of their yarns, calicoes, and prints, raised by Act of Parliament, what would be the reception which such a proposition would meet? It might be said, indeed, that the cases were not parallel—that something had been done which had produced calamity in the case of the West Indies—and that it had been done by this House. He altogether disbelieved it; for it was in evidence before the Committee over which the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn had presided, that up to 1845 their state had been one of considerable prosperity. According to that evidence their distress had arisen from the Act of 1846; but the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken negatived that view of the matter, and proposed to go back to the Emancipation Act as the real cause of that distress. But there were volumes in the library of the House which showed that the West Indians had made the same complaints for the last fifty years, and that their prayers for monopoly, for protection, for increased protection, were unremitting. It had been admitted that the money which the planters had received for the emancipation of their slaves had been applied in payment of mortgages on their properties. But what was the inference which such a fact justified? Either their pursuits had not been prosperous, or their course had been extravagant. Where, then, was the proof that the Act of 1834 or the Act of 1846 had been the cause of the distress of which the West Indians complained? And how could they ask that House to reimpose on the people of this country duties which had been removed with the greatest benefit? A return had been received within the last day or two with regard to the importation of raw cotton into this country since the year 1815. In 1815, and in previous years, it appeared from that return that there had been a considerable importation of cotton into this country from the West Indies. That importation had gradually fallen off; and the question suggested itself, how did it happen that a variety of articles, formerly produced in the West Indies, had not been produced there of late years? The cause, he believed, was, that in consequence of the protection afforded to certain articles of West Indian produce, cultivation in the West Indies had been directed to articles on which a protection duty existed, and diverted from others which might have otherwise been cultivated with advantage. A gentleman who had recently come from the West Indies had brought with him some nutmegs and cloves which had been grown there. He had samples of them in his pocket, and would be glad to show them to hon. Gentlemen opposite. The friend from whom he had received them, stated the prices of the nutmegs at 3*s.* per lb., and the cloves at 13*d.* or 14*d.* per lb. in bond. The gentleman who brought them from the West Indies gave it as his opinion that a very large trade might be carried on in those and many other articles; and he agreed in attributing the cessation of production as regarded certain articles of produce to the attention of the West Indian planters having been altogether directed to the cultivation of those articles on which a protecting duty existed. With respect to immigration from Africa into the West Indies, the clamour now made in favour of such a measure had been made a few years ago for Coolie immigration. To have a population out of proportion to the capital which there was to invest, would be of no service to the West Indies. The failure of the Coolie immigration was admitted; and there could not be a greater calamity than the introduction of African immigrants into the West Indies at an expense of 500,000*l.*, when there were no adequate means of rendering their labour available. It would be money thrown away. If by the expenditure of a large amount of public money they brought so many labourers into that colony, they would find after the lapse of a few years, as they had found in the case of the Coolies, that the whole system was wrong from beginning to end. Of the West Indian population 92½ per cent were black; to these a horde of uncultivated Africans were to be added. It was not, he suspected, intended to take over an equal proportion of women; they were going to bring into these colonies, where so happy and contented a negro community now existed, elements of social evil and contamination, which would more than counterbalance any advantage which might be secured in the diminished price of labour. Adverting to what had fallen from the hon. Member for the University of Oxford, he thought it was audacity in any one to stand up in that House under the fancy that justice to Africa was to be done by injustice to England, and that the cause of emancipation could be advanced by adopting the principle on which monopolies were based. He agreed with the hon. Member for Leominster (Mr. Barkly) in thinking that by proposing an alteration of the Act of 1846, the noble Lord had given rise to the supposition that the Act of 1846 was not a judicious measure. It would have been better had the noble Lord adhered to that Act, as embodying the solemn opinion and decision of Parliament—an opinion and decision which had been ratified by the country, and confirmed by the experience they had had of its operation in respect of the public revenue. The alteration was not very material; but it was calculated to throw dust in the eyes of the House, so that under a discontent existing on all hands the Government might be able to carry their proposition. If he were a Member of a Government—which he certainly hoped he never would be, as he hoped the House would give him credit for sincerity in saying so—and if he were called upon to decide in such capacity on the course he should take in the present instance, he would declare that he believed the Bill which it was proposed to alter to be sound in principle, and most important as regarded not only the Exchequer but the people of the country; and, having made that declaration, he should take his stand upon that ground; and if he could not maintain the measure against the efforts of interested parties, he should at once go out of office. One word of warning to hon. Members opposite as to their predictions. The country had passed through a period of unexampled difficulty. Hon. Gentlemen pointed to the last two years—they pointed to the sufferings which had been felt in Lancashire as consequent on the introduction of free trade in corn—but of this he could assure those hon. Gentlemen, that there was not a man in Lancashire who had been in favour of free trade in corn before the Legislature proceeded to act on that principle, who was not now of the same opinion. By the bounty of Divine Providence they had now a larger supply of corn—there was abundance growing for their consumption in America. These were the elements of prosperity for this country, which no predictions of evil could prevent from developing themselves. Prosperity would again prevail in Lancashire among all the industrial classes. Hon. Gentlemen should beware of what they predicted; for the newspapers would record, and *Hansard* would perpetuate, whatever they said now, to their confusion and discomfiture when the event was seen. Let hon. Gentlemen ask their tenantry whether, if the present prospects were realised, the price of wheat would not be below 40*s*. at Christmas? With wheat at free-trade prices, they would not thank hon. Members for increasing taxes and adding to the price of sugar. The Government, he believed, would find that the public feeling would be much more lasting in their favour were they to ascertain and assert what were sound principles; and he had no doubt that the country would firmly maintain and support any Government which strenuously adhered to the principle of the Act of 1846.

MR. BAILLIE thought the hon. Member for Manchester, who had just sat down, was the only Member of the House who would have had the audacity to assume to represent the great body of the people of this country. The hon. Member represented the cotton interests of Manchester, and had attempted to draw a comparison with respect to the legislation of this country for the cotton interests of this country and the colonists of the West Indies; but he (Mr. Baillie) would ask why the cotton of the Americans was admitted duty free, while the sugar of our West Indian colonists was taxed 14*s*. a cwt.? He did not think that this proposal of the noble Lord would be deemed satisfactory by those who thought that Government should adopt measures to save our West Indian colonists from the ruin with which they were threatened. There were two courses which the noble Lord might have adopted. He might have come boldly and frankly before the House, and stated that, believing the principle of the Bill of 1846 to be fair and just, he was determined to maintain it, whatever the consequences might be. Or he might have stated that, believing the principle of the Bill to be fair and just, that, nevertheless, taking into consideration the peculiar circumstances of the case—taking into consideration that the Bill of 1846 had tended to produce great distress in the colonies, and had also tended to increase the slave trade—he was prepared to relax that Bill for a certain period until the colonies were supplied with labour; and that until that time arrived he would afford the colonists effectual protection. The noble Lord had not thought proper to pursue either course. He had, to a certain extent, relaxed the Bill of 1846, and thereby admitted its injustice; but he was not going to give anything that could be deemed effectual protection. So far as the colonies were concerned, it was a matter of indifference to them whether the Bill of 1846 were carried out strictly, or the proposed relaxations were adopted. In either case their ruin must be complete; and it were better for them it took place at once, than that they should be exterminated by a slow and tedious, but no less sure and certain process. All accounts from the West Indies bore ample testimony that the Bill of 1846 had given an immense impulse to the slave trade. When that Bill was under discussion in that House, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Tamworth had clearly and distinctly pointed out the inevitable consequence of the measure in increasing the slave trade. He stated, however, that he supported the Bill, lest, by opposing it, he should cause the Government to retire from office, at a time when no other Government could be formed. He would ask, was the House of Commons to give its support year after year, to measures of which it disapproved—measures which the majority believed to be unjust—because there were no men in England to be found capable of carrying on the Government of this country? He would rather see a Chartist Government, or any other, in office, than lend himself to a course of action so humiliating and unconstitutional. He confessed his surprise that Her Majesty's Government should, from a fear of any hostile majority, have been deterred from carrying into effect any measure which they believed to be just. It would have been better if the Government had come forward and boldly and manfully declared that they would stand or fall by the Bill of 1846, rather than introduce a measure which, while on the one hand, it gave no effectual relief to the colonial interests, on the other substantially violated that measure which the noble Lord and the Chancellor of the Exchequer emphatically declared they were determined to maintain.

MR. COBDEN: It was not my intention to take any part in the discussion of this question to-night, and I would not have risen but for the remarks of the hon. Member who has just sat down, with reference to my hon. Friend the Member for Manchester (Mr. Bright). He used rather a strong word when he spoke of the "audacity" of my hon. Friend. [Mr. BAILLIE: It was his own expression.] I was not aware that my hon. Friend had used that term. [Mr. BAILLIE: He applied it to the hon. Baronet the Member for the University of Oxford.] That is hardly a sufficient excuse, I think, for the hon. Gentleman in using the term in the way he did to my hon. Friend. But there was another allusion which he made to my hon. Friend, which I wish particularly to refer to. He described him as the representative of the cotton interest. Now, I am the representative of the woollen interest, an indigenous industry, of which there is no jealousy in this House, and which is honoured by the President of the other House sitting on the Woolsack. I am the representative of a county which was eminent in the slavery movement. No one can deny that Yorkshire, by returning Wilberforce on anti-slavery grounds, and by becoming the head-quarters of the slavery movement, was intimately connected with the cause of negro emancipation, and that its sympathies must naturally be in favour of the negro everywhere. Now, I unhesitatingly assert that nearly all the men who led the agitation for the emancipation of the slaves, and who by their influence on public opinion aided in producing that result, are against those hon. Gentlemen in this House who advocate a differential duty on foreign sugar with a view to put down slavery abroad. I am well acquainted with the existing state of opinion in Yorkshire, and I defy any one to controvert the assertion that hon. Members opposite are acting in direct opposition to the prevailing sentiment in that county, when they advocate a differential duty on slave-grown sugar. Hon. Gentlemen should not forget that Yorkshire and Lancashire are suffering distress as well as the West Indies. I attended a deputation from Bradford which waited upon the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for Home Affairs a few days ago, with the view of obtaining some assistance to alleviate the great distress prevailing in that town. I heard a member of that deputation state that he had nearly 1,000 working people out of employment in Bradford; and that for the last 18 months it would have been more profitable for many of the manufacturers to have closed their establishments and not to have employed one of their workmen. They stated, also, that they were levying poor-rates to an enormous amount for the sustenance of the population there. The deputation went away without the slightest hope that either the Government or this House would interfere in any way to relieve the people from their distress. Well, it is very natural for these persons when they see the West Indians coming to this House and pressing for a remedy for their distress, and when they see money voted and taxes raised for the purpose of sustaining a fraction of the population of the West Indies—for you must bear in mind that it is only 7½ per cent of the population there who are distressed at all—I say it is very natural for the people of Yorkshire, and of Bradford in particular, to feel discontented when they see money voted and relief given to a favoured interest, and no relief given to themselves whatever. I therefore think it fair, as the representative of an important district not connected with that kind of industry—I mean the cotton trade—which seems to meet so little favour in this House, to add my testimony to that of my hon. Friend, that in voting money to the West Indians, you are not pursuing a course that will be satisfactory to the people of Yorkshire, or of the country generally. I do not intend to enter upon the question which has been raised by an hon. Member opposite, as to allowing the West Indian produce to enter this country duty free. That could be easily answered; but I shall reserve myself on that point till

Monday. I merely rose for the purpose of repeating the opinion of my hon. Friend, and I shall not say another word to prevent us going into the subject of the navigation laws, which I believe is waiting for the consideration of the House.

Mr. HUME must express his deep regret at the statement which had been made by the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell). Were he connected with the West Indies he should much prefer the existing Act as it stood; for the proposal of the noble Lord would only prolong a lingering existence, while at the same time it would occasion a loss to the revenue of this country. He confessed he could not understand how the noble Lord and his Colleagues, after protesting, as they had repeatedly done, that nothing would induce them to alter or meddle with that Act, could now come down to that House, and unblushingly propose an alteration almost equivalent to its repeal—for they might as well have proposed its repeal as the alteration they now proposed. He, therefore, must express his deep regret at the statement made by the noble Lord. It had been his (Mr. Hume's) intention last Session, and also again at the commencement of the present Session, to bring the question of the West Indies before the House—but upon grounds very different from those entertained by some of his free-trade Friends, who, in his opinion, took a one-sided view of the matter altogether. His hon. Friend the Member for the West Riding had put, without hesitation, the manufacturers of Yorkshire and Lancashire on the same footing as the West India proprietors. Now, the fact was, that the one had abundance of labourers—more, indeed, than they could employ; and the others had too few, and were refused the means of obtaining more. The two cases rested upon an entirely different footing, because in Bradford and the other manufacturing towns there was no law in existence to prevent the manufacturers obtaining as many labourers as they pleased; whereas the West India proprietors had ever since 1837 been prevented by our legislation and Orders in Council from obtaining that supply of labourers which they so much required. He held upon the best principles of free trade that they were bound to give relief to the parties who were oppressed by our legislation. The course which the Government ought to have taken was to have added to the supply of labourers in our West Indian colonies, and to have given the proprietors the means of fairly competing with their opponents. This would have been far better than the proposed frittering away of the public money, which would do no good to the parties who got it; for unless something was done to restore confidence in those colonies, and to give them the means of manufacturing sugar cheaper than in the slave colonies, their utter ruin must inevitably ensue. He agreed that protection would never put an end to the distress. He had always contended that by making free labour cheaper than slave labour they could alone put down slavery. He looked upon the money spent in maintaining blockading fleets on the coast of Africa as so much waste, and he deeply regretted to see different Governments, year after year, spending a million in this way. The measure for emancipating the slaves was proposed, he admitted, with the best intentions; and they could not conceal from themselves that so overwhelming was the public feeling at that time in favour of abolition that no Government could have resisted it. Still it was carried in such a hasty and precipitate manner that it could hardly be expected that good could come from it. A Committee, of which Sir Fowell Buxton was chairman, sat for an entire Session, and heard the opponents of the West Indians. The Committee came to no report, but they recommended that they should be allowed to sit again next Session to enable the colonists to tell their tale. The colonists were ready to enter upon their defence, and to show the preliminary measures that were necessary to be adopted before emancipation could take place with any reasonable hope of success; but the House would not listen to them; and the proposition for emancipation was brought forward and hurried through with a discreditable degree of haste. Unless measures were speedily taken to supply the means of labour in the colonies, the result, he maintained, must be their utter ruin; and then it would appear to the whole world that after all the sacrifices and exertions we had made, emancipation had failed. This was not a question of pounds, shillings, and pence; it was a question of humanity. He had resisted the grant of 20,000,000*l.* when it was proposed, until it should first be ascertained by a Committee that it could be advanced with safety, and the requisite preparations made for so great and important a change; but the House hooted him down. The then Speaker, Mr. Abercrombie, told him he would not get six Members to vote with him, and he did not press his Motion; which he now very much regretted—for experience had shown how rash all their proceedings had been. He hoped that that error would not be repeated, but that the House would now seriously consider the propriety of adopting some means for rendering the great measure of emancipation successful, for if it failed it would be a disgrace to the whole world, and we need never expect to see any other attempt made for the freedom of the slave.

Mr. H. DRUMMOND did not rise for the purpose of prolonging the discussion except for a moment. The hon. Gentleman who had just spoken, had said that it would be impossible to cultivate sugar by free labour, unless the number of labourers in the colonies was so large as to ensure their being had at a low rate. Now, he was persuaded that if they sent labourers to these colonies in their present condition, the result would be that they would settle upon the lands, and they would get no labour from them at all. He believed it was well known that the negroes could live perfectly well there upon *6d.* a day; and this being the case he believed that they would "squat" upon the lands and be of little or no use to the proprietors. He objected to the way the colonists were treated by hon. Gentlemen opposite, not because he objected to free-trade principles to their utmost extent, but because they wanted to have free trade between South America and Jamaica, having previously destroyed the machinery in Jamaica by which sugar was made. Suppose that in Lancashire the spinning-jennies and mules were all destroyed, how absurd would it be then to talk of free trade between the manufacturers of Lancashire and Yorkshire! The question for the House to consider was not the mere question of cheapness. The question for the House to consider was something more than the mere cotton and sugar interest. It was, how they were to preserve our colonies; and in his opinion, if the Government were not prepared to submit a comprehensive and effectual measure, it would be infinitely better to leave them as they were.

Mr. P. MILES could not let that opportunity pass without stating his belief that the measure of Her Majesty's Government would not save the colonies. He had thought the Government would content themselves with some half-measure on the subject, and he had not been disappointed. The colonies were on the brink of ruin, and the noble Lord proposed to save them by giving them that which could be of no service to them. The differential duty enjoyed under the present classification in West India muscovado sugar, as compared with white Havana, was not more at that moment than *5d.* How could the colonies be saved by a reduction of 18*d.* in the differential duty? It would be far better to let the islands remain in the same state than to pass such a measure as might induce them to carry on the manufacture of sugar for some two or three years longer, and then leave them as badly off as ever. To show the state of distress in which the colonies were involved, he would quote a despatch in the blue book laid on the table yesterday. And here he could not but say he did not think the House had been treated quite fairly by the Colonial Office with respect to these returns. Fully a month had elapsed since he asked for these despatches, and he was assured by the Government that no delay should take place in presenting them. Notwithstanding this they were only laid on the table yesterday, and it could hardly be expected, with this question coming on so soon, that hon. Members could read through a blue book some two or three inches thick in the interval. The despatch to which he referred was from Lord Harris, the Governor of Trinidad, to Earl Grey, dated April 5, 1848. He said—

> "It is sad and painful to behold men expecting ruin quickly to overtake them; it is perhaps sadder and more painful to see them struggling and toiling against adversity, but with their energies dulled, and their arms palsied, from the knowledge that their labours must be unremunerative, and that failure can be the sole result; it is most distressing to witness this, and at the same time to be aware that much of the misery from which they are suffering, and that which awaits them, is of a nature which they are unable to avert by any acts of their own. It is pitiable to witness a fine colony daily deteriorating; a land enjoying almost every blessing under heaven, suffering from a shock from which it does not rally; but the deepest pang of all, to an Englishman, is to see the hearts and the affections of a whole population becoming gradually alienated irom the country which he loves. It is impossible for me to express too forcibly the extent of the present distress. I could quote to your Lordship estates, as far as their soil is concerned, of great value, and giving previously to emancipation a large income, on which the whole of the redemption money was expended in improvements; which were entirely free from debt at that time, and which are now

mortgaged almost to their full value, and their proprietors, resident Creoles, too, from being in good circumstances, reduced to the last extremities. In these cases the want of labour at a fair rate has been the chief cause of their embarrassments; they surely have some claim for assistance from the mother country. Moreover, under the present grave circumstances of Europe, and the world in general, I would add, that if the power of England, and her interests, are to be maintained in this portion of it—and I think they are worth maintaining—it would not be impolitic that some sympathy of a practical nature should be shown, and as early as practicable, by the mother country."

He would trouble them with another extract from the despatch of Sir C. Grey to Earl Grey, dated Jamaica, 21st of February, 1848, received 27th of March, and laid before the House June 15th:—

> "A permanent *Gazette* price of less than 30*s.* the hundred-weight for West India muscovado, I firmly believe will cause the greater portion of the sugar cultivation of this island to be abandoned; and if I were to be called upon for a recommendation founded upon the most comprehensive and painstaking review of the whole subject which I am capable of making, it would be, that, as far as still more important State affairs will permit, the duties on British muscovado should be brought towards the limit of 1*d.* per pound, and those on foreign to 2*d.*, liable to special relaxations in favour of such foreign States as should bind themselves by treaty to give a similar measure of justice to their labourers as we give to ours."

So far from the *Gazette* price of sugar being 30*s.* it was not more than 21*s.* The House, then, might understand how considerable as well as inevitable must be the ruin of the sugar interests in the islands. For a long time the West Indies had had a bad supply of labour, and it did not appear from the statement of the noble Lord that there was any prospect of improvement in this respect. Reference had been made to the East Indies on this subject, but it was evident the supply of labour made a material difference between them and the West. Having referred to the evidence of Mr. Hawes before the Committee, where that hon. Gentleman was reported to have said that there was a likelihood of the West Indies having a better supply of labour in future, but from what causes he could not at that moment perceive, the hon. Member concluded by suggesting that, in consequence of the great importance of the result, the sailing of the West India packet should be deferred from to-morrow evening to Tuesday morning.

MR. HENLEY could not but think the principles of morality advocated by the hon. Gentlemen opposite (Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright) very extraordinary indeed, nor could he avoid protesting against their reception by that House. The noble Lord (Lord John Russell) certainly had stated that the Government would maintain the principles of the Emancipation Act of 1834, and had enforced that statement at the beginning and termination of his speech; but he could assure the noble Lord he was very much mistaken if he thought the people of this country would be satisfied with a mere verbal adherence to the letter and terms of the Act, while its principle was utterly abrogated and done away with. He could not help congratulating the House on the very extraordinary change which had come over the hon. Member for the West Riding (Mr. Cobden), and on the very thin-skinned condition at which he appeared to have arrived. The hon. Member had got up quite in a storm of indignation at the idea of any hon. Member using the term "audacity" in that House, altogether forgetting the fact that this very term "audacity" had been used by his own Friend (Mr. Bright) towards the hon. Member for Oxford. The word was not unparliamentary, and he was astonished at the indignation. The hon. Member and his Friends had declared bad harvests had nothing to do with the state of the country. *Hansard* would prove that these Gentlemen promised the country, that if their nostrum were adopted, all misfortunes would be relieved, and distress removed. Then bad harvests had nothing to do with distress; it was bad legislation which caused it all. Now, it appeared that hon. Gentlemen changed their tone, and said their measures had failed, for the very reasons to which they before refused to assign any weight. The hon. Gentleman had said, too, he would give up the honour of the country if he could get ships cheaper. [Mr. COBDEN: No!] It had certainly been so stated over and over again, and the hon. Gentleman had used in his hearing expressions to a similar effect. It would appear that he was now prepared to give up the humanity of the country if he could get sugar cheaper. [Mr. COBDEN: No, no!] He could tell the hon. Gentleman, however, he (Mr. Henley) did not believe the people of this country would accept cheap sugar at such a price.

MR. HUDSON had heard two or three assertions from hon. Gentlemen opposite which rather astonished him. He had been forewarned by the hon. Member for

Manchester (Mr. Bright), when he declared the effect of the repeal of the corn laws would be that corn would be down to 40*s.*, that he was a false prophet. The hon. Member for the West Riding and his Colleagues had ridiculed the idea of such a price; but they were very nearly realised. These hon. Gentlemen now attributed the distress to the state of the cotton market. But cotton was lower now than it had ever been. It was never, during the last year, higher than 6½*d.* a lb., and in times back it never had been lower than 10½*d.* a lb. He would not offend the delicate ears of the hon. Member by any strong terms; but he really was astonished that any hon. Member should get up and state the distress of the manufacturing interest arose from the high price of cotton. The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cobden) had boasted that Yorkshire furnished all the early friends of emancipation; but he begged to tell him it was not from his (Mr. Cobden's) district they came. The chairman of Mr. Wilberforce's Committee (Lord Faversham) was no cotton manufacturer, nor were any other of his foremost friends and assistants.

Mr. E. DENISON: The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cobden) had described an interview between a deputation from Lancashire and Yorkshire and the President of the Board of Trade, with respect to the state of the manufacturing districts, and had attempted to draw a parallel case between those districts and the West Indies. But there was this difference between them, that the legislation of the House with respect to Yorkshire and Lancashire had been entirely in accordance with the wishes of their inhabitants, and therefore those districts could not, with any justice, ask assistance from the House in any matters affecting the law; while the legislation adopted with respect to the West Indies had been distinctly opposed to the wishes of the people. In every resolution of the Committee over which the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) presided, he had found a principle something similar to that laid down by the hon. Member who had lately joined the Administration, and who was a great authority on these points, when he declared in terms, "that if Parliament should agree with the opinion of the Committee, that it was incumbent on them to grant relief to the sugar growing colonies, it should be afforded at once." That, as he took it, was an admission that some compensation was due, in the hon. Gentleman's opinion, to the West Indies. With respect to these questions, he entirely disagreed with the hon. Gentleman and the hon. Member for the West Riding (Mr. Cobden), and, as an honest man, he must declare his belief that compensation was due to those colonies. The question for them now to consider was, whether the proposition of Her Majesty's Government held out any hope to the West Indies, in the way recommended by the Committee. With great regret he had to say that, as far as his knowledge went, the proposition of the noble Lord would not avert the ruin which threatened them. He, for one, would be ready to join any party in taking any reasonable course to avert such a great calamity.

Mr. HERRIES said, the noble Lord at the head of Her Majesty's Government was placed in a very unenviable position, in consequence of the statement he had made to the House. A number of hon. Members had spoken, but not one of them approved of the noble Lord's proposition, or had given it his support. On the contrary, every one of them had intimated his intention of opposing it on some ground or another. After a Committee, conducted with such extraordinary ability by the noble Lord (Lord George Bentinck), had sat for such a length of time, and had produced such a mass of information as never yet had been laid on the table of the House on any one subject—after it had issued reports and come to resolutions and counter resolutions—the result was, that the Government brought forward a measure which did not meet one of the requirements which they had recommended, or the approbation of any one Member of the House. The noble Lord's proposition was no measure—it was a mere pretext for a measure; it was a mere attempt to get rid of a question surrounded, he admitted, by embarrassments, but deserving of earnest attention. The measure positively proposed no remedy for any one of the great evils which abounded in that most difficult and painful question. He could not help agreeing with the hon. Baronet the Member for the University of Oxford, when he said he had heard with surprise the speech of the noble Lord on this subject. Bound up as it was with the consideration of the slave question, which had been treated in such a way, and which had been so complicated by our recent legislation, that instead of lessening we had aggravated its tremendous evils, it was to have been expected that the noble Lord would have said something at least in reference to it; but not one word had he uttered with respect to the possible result of the measure, nor of any remedy for the evils which we had encouraged by our legislation; not one word of the noble Lord's speech adverted to that most difficult question. The country stood in this position. After having expended, rightly, as he believed, a very large sum of money in abrogating the slave trade—aftor having for a long series of years made monstrous efforts at great expense, and with no small opposition and difficulty on the part of other States, to obtain the consent of the European Powers in putting an end to slavery, this House passed an Act which gave the greatest possible encouragement to that detestable traffic, and exhibited them, on the one hand, declaring their intention to make every effort to suppress slavery, and, on the other, doing their best to encourage it. The result had been, as they were informed on evidence they could not doubt, that they had greatly added to the suffering condition of the slaves; and yet when the noble Lord brought forward a measure intimately connected with the subject, he had not during the whole of his speech once adverted to it. The alternative was plain. They must either put down the slave trade, or must agree to continue it in the colonies. If they pursued their present course they would ruin the colonies—perhaps they intended to do so. At all events the present measure could have no effect in attaining the end proposed by it. That object was, he supposed, to afford something of relief to the West Indies; but the measure held out no real relief to them, nor any escape from ruin. Did the noble Lord for one moment believe that an alteration in the duty to the extent of 1*s.* could have such an effect over prices as to affect the consumption of sugar in this country? Any one the least conversant with public business would tell him that it could not have any such effect; next he proposed, among other things, to assign the West Indians some 500,000*l.*, as he supposed by way of loan, in order to enable them to introduce free labour; but could it be supposed for a moment that such a sum would enable them to do so on a scale large enough to afford them effectual assistance? He did not mean to go into a discussion of the whole question on this occasion; but he thought that it did not require waiting until Monday in order to come to the opinion that the scheme proposed by the noble Lord must end in entire failure. His decided opinion was, that the noble Lord would be disappointed if he hoped to see any of the beneficial results which he professed to anticipate from this measure. He could not believe that it would be productive of benefit to any of the interests involved in it. He wished to add one word as to the financial results with regard to this country. He did not anticipate that the alteration of one shilling could effect such a change in the price of sugar as would lead to an increased consumption of the article to any considerable extent so as to have an effect on the revenue. He wished therefore to know how it was that the right hon. Gentleman opposite (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) intended to wind up the incomplete budget which the House had as yet only before them. They had hitherto been endeavouring to ward off the labours which they would have to get through, or, he should more properly say, they had been shirking through the business of the Session, but he would remind them that sooner or later they must take into consideration the loss of the revenue that must be increased by this—he would say it without meaning any disrespect—very futile measure proposed by the noble Lord.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I am glad to have heard the views of the right hon. Gentleman before addressing the House, because, though we have heard a great number of Gentlemen on this question, we have been hitherto left without the slightest clue to any sort of remedy that it was proposed to apply, to meet the evils that are admitted to press on the West India colonies. My hon. Friend the Member for Montrose talked of a large measure and of large supplies of labour, but without telling the House what that large measure ought to be, or how the large supply of labour was to be obtained. We have had proposals on the part of the West India planters to enable them to buy slaves in the barracoons on the coast of Africa, on the understanding that they were to be set free on reaching the West Indies; but that is a measure which I am happy to say Her Majesty's Government will never consent to; for, whatever might be said to the contrary, there can be no doubt but that by adopting such a system, you would give a most direct encouragement to the internal slave trade of Africa. Whether my hon. Friend the Member for Montrose would go that length in proposing his extensive measure or not, I am unable to say, but I hope he would not do so. And yet, short of such a plan, I cannot see what the extensive measure of my hon. Friend could be, for I know of no other restriction to the importation of free labour into the West India colonies that could be removed by the Legislature. If any measure short of this to which I have alluded be proposed to the House, I will answer not only for the Government, but for the Colonial Office, that it will receive every consideration and assistance that can be afforded to it. We are most anxious to promote every admission of free labour that can be desired in the colonies, provided only that the labourers came of their own free will. I have again to say that I should be exceedingly glad to know what the measures for procuring a greater amount of free labour into the West India colonies, short of an encouragement to the slave trade, are to be. I believe that the great difficulty which has been found to exist in this matter is that of the want of money, which the Government now propose to meet, and that, with the exception of the want of sufficient funds, there is no obstacle whatever that the Legislature could remove, preventing the colonists from importing any amount of labour that they may require. But the right hon. Gentleman at once comes to the question with a proposal for excluding all slave-grown sugar altogether, for I understood him to say that the only choice that was left for us was either to exclude slave-grown sugar, or to adhere to the system of encouragement to slavery. [Mr. HERRIES: I never said anything of the kind.] I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon, but I certainly understood him to say that we must choose between the encouragement of slavery, by the admission of slave-grown sugar, or the carrying out of the Act of 1844 by excluding slave-grown sugar altogether from this country. If the right hon. Gentleman, however, will be good enough to explain what he did say, I will be most anxious to hear him. I certainly understood the right hon. Gentleman to express himself as I have stated; and my noble Friend on my left (Lord John Russell), and my right hon. Friend on my right (Mr. Labouchere), understood him as I did, and they cheered him at the time. As he has not taken occasion to explain what he did say, I have only to repeat my regret that I have misrepresented him. But if we are to exclude slave-grown sugar from this country, as I understood the right hon. Gentleman to contend for— [Mr. HERRIES: I never said a word about positive exclusion of slave-grown sugar.] I am obliged to my right hon. Friend for his explanation. It now appears that he did not mean to exclude entirely slave-grown sugar, as he would admit it at a high differential duty; but I would beg to remind him that the Bill of 1844 did, to a certain extent, directly admit slave-grown sugar. The Act of 1844 admitted the slave-grown sugar of Venezuela and the United States. ["Oh!"] Will hon. Gentlemen deny that the Bill of 1844 admitted the slave-grown sugar of these countries at the same rate of duty as the free-labour sugar of other foreign countries? and, if we were right in the construction which we put at the time upon other treaties, it admitted Cubar sugar also. Hon. Gentlemen opposite may deny that construction of the treaty if they please, but my decided impression is that our view of the question at the time was right. But in 1846 the great majority of the House affirmed the principle of the admission of slave-grown sugar. The principle was distinctly affirmed of free trade in sugar as well as in corn; and the only point that then remained for consideration was, not the ultimate exclusion of slave-grown sugar, but the maintenance of a system of protection for an adequate time, in order to enable the colonists to introduce a sufficiency of free labour, so as ultimately to enable them to compete with the slave-producing countries. And it was then asserted, as it has been to-night, that the only chance which there is of putting down slave labour is by the superior cheapness of free labour. But if that principle be admitted, as it is, by West Indian interests themselves, it would appear that we are now to retrograde to an extraordinary extent, for even the principle that was contended for in the Committee of which the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn was chairman, was only that the protection was to be continued for a further period of six years, that being thought an adequate time to allow the colonists to compete with slave-labour countries. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Leominster (Mr. Barkly) would not go even that length; and his proposal was for a duty of 10*s.* for two years, and then a falling off into the existing scale of duties. But everybody that I know, except the right hon. Gentleman alone, contemplates that at some period or other, some say after six years, others after five years, and others after two years, the entire removal of the differential duty. The question is, therefore, unless we are to go back from the decision of the House by a large majority in 1846, and the decision of the Committee in this very year, for what time is protection to be given? and it is not a question for the prevention of slave-grown sugar altogether from being imported into this country. When the question comes to be discussed on Monday night, I shall be prepared to show that the proposal of the Government is a better one than any of those which I have mentioned; but at the same time I was never sanguine enough to suppose that any proposal that Government might make would meet with any great favour from some hon. Gentlemen opposite. The hon. Member for Droitwich, I understand, intends to move an Amendment on Monday night to carry out the proposal of the Committee for the maintenance of a differential duty for six years; but I believe the views entertained by Her Majesty's Government will be supported by a large majority of the House. I, for one, am certainly not prepared to increase the protection given to the West Indian colonies; but at the same time I think it may be desirable to give them the confidence that will be afforded them of having a longer protection than they would have under the Act of 1846; and I do not think that in taking that course we would be in the least degree departing from the principle of the Act of 1846. It is a transition state from the principle of protection to the principle of free-trade, and, as I have always held, I think it is desirable, in that transition state, to deal delicately and tenderly with the protected interests. The right hon. Gentleman said that he could have obviated the evils of the Act of 1846, and I am exceedingly sorry that he did not suggest any of the measures by which he would propose to do so. I put off the decision of the Committee for two or three days with the object of receiving suggestions; but the advocates of the West India proprietors said that they had no suggestions to offer. My right hon. Friend, however, knows that I would have been most happy to hear any propositions that might be put forward. I fully admit that it is desirable for the colonies to enable them to maintain their cultivation. I further believe that it is for the interest of this country that that cultivation should be maintained; and it is on that principle that the Government propose this measure, and not on any ground of altering the principle of the Act of 1846, which acknowledged for a certain period the necessity of enabling the colonies to compete with slave labour. We believe that materials exist in this measure for enabling the colonists to compete with slave labour in the only way in which it is admitted that slave labour can be met—by the competition of free labour; and to that competition, it is further admitted, the colonies must sooner or later come. I have only one word to say as to the effect of this measure on the revenue. Between the proposal for maintaining a differential duty of 20*s.* on foreign sugar, and 10*s.* on colonial sugar, and the proposal of Her Majesty's Government, I think there can be no doubt but that the proposal of the Government is the more advantageous to the revenue. The proposal of the Committee, which would entail a loss of 4*s.* a cwt. on colonial sugar, would be equivalent, supposing that the consumption of 1847 were to continue, to a loss of 960,000*l.*, and there was no chance of any increase of consumption that would make up such a deficiency. On the other hand, according to the evidence laid before the Committee, to which the right hon. Gentleman attached so much value, the additional importation under the proposed change would not be less than 20,000 tons; but I will suppose that it will not exceed 15,000 tons; if these 15,000 tons were entirely colonial sugar, the loss would be 45,000*l.* If they were 10,000 colonial and 5,000 foreign sugar, the loss would be but 10,000*l.*; and if the consumption happened to arrive at 20,000 tons, the whole loss would be more than made up by the increased consumption. I do not think, therefore, that I need calculate on any considerable loss to the revenue by the proposition of the Government. As I said before, the proposal of the Committee would involve a deficiency of 960,000*l.*; whereas our proposal, taking the increase at only 15,000 tons, and at the minimum rate of duty, would not exceed 45,000*l.*

MR. VILLIERS said, that it was not to be considered as conclusive against the measure, that nobody seemed to agreed in approbation of it. It was a characteristic of the evidence given before the Committee, that none of the witnesses agreed as to the remedy to be applied. They all certainly admitted the great distress under which the colonies suffered, but they could not agree in any remedy by which that distress could be met. The same want of unanimity seemed to prevail in that House. He was sure that if any stranger had come into the House that night, and had heard the speech of his hon. Friend the Member for Montrose, knowing at the same time the vigorous manner in which his hon. Friend had always advocated the principles of free trade, he would have been astounded at the sentiments to which his hon. Friend had given utterance. The result to which a stranger would arrive was, that his hon. Friend had been blaming the Legislature, in the first place, for abolishing slavery; and, in the next place, for having adopted the principles of free trade. For his own part, he could never understand his hon. Friend on the subject of the West Indies; but he had no doubt his hon. Friend would explain his views more fully on Monday next. Though there was much difference of opinion among the witnesses examined before the Committee, there was one point on which all were agreed, that the colonists wanted a freer access to labour than they now enjoyed. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stamford had spoken of the proposal of Government as a very paltry measure to remedy this evil; but he would beg to remind him that the hon. Member for Bristol, who gave evidence before the Committee, and who was a witness as well as a judge in the matter, had declared that it was not so much a great addition of labour that was required in the colonies, as the moral results of a feeling on the part of the negro population that the colonists could procure such an additional amount of labour as they might find necessary. In fact, the hon. Gentleman thought that there was perhaps a sufficient amount of labour in the colonies already, but that the idea existed among the negroes that they could command their own terms from the proprietors; and he thought that all that was necessary was to let them see that they would not have it all their own way, but that facilities would be given by the Government to introduce additional labour into the colonies. Now, if this view were correct, the present measure, though it could not lay claim to the title of a great and comprehensive scheme, was one in the right direction; and though the 500,000*l.* might not go a great way, it would still meet the views of the proprietors, and show the negro population that a power was given by the Government to the proprietors to import such additional labour as they might require.

Lord G. BENTINCK: I would much rather not have to address the House on this occasion; but as the West India mail is ready to go out to-morrow night, I think it necessary to remark that this measure, when it goes forth to the colonies, will carry dismay and despair to them, while, at the same time, it will cause regret to the minds of all those who lament to see the progress which the slave trade has made within the last two years. No measure like that proposed by the noble Lord opposite will be of any avail whatever in averting the ruin of the British colonies, and of the sugar plantations in the British possessions in India. What does it amount to? In amounts to this: that as regards the finer qualities of sugar, the position of the sugar planters is to be mended as regards the position in which they stood in the year ending the 5th of July, 1848, to the extent of 1*s.* a hundred-weight; and, as regards the second quality of sugar, their position is only to be improved by 6*d.* a hundred-weight. Sir, when the colonies have been struck down under the 6*s.* protection duty, can any one say that a protecting duty of 7*s.* on the better qualities of sugar, and of 5*s.* 6*d.* on the second quality of sugar, is to resuscitate them, or even to prevent them from further sinking? Why, as far as such protection goes, it is madness to expect that it can be of any avail in saving the British planters from the ruin that has fallen upon them. I come next to the question of relief which is to be extended to them in the shape of a loan to the extent of 500,000*l.*, in addition to the 170,000*l.* that has been already advanced in aid of immigration. But what is the use of lending money to a man to go on with a losing trade? The trade has been already ruined. It was ruined under the 6*s.* protection; and can it be rendered other than a ruinous trade while it continues in no better position than that under which those engaged in it have succumbed to the foreigner? I look, then, on this measure as being perfectly futile. As I said before, I regard the proposition of the noble Lord as calculated to carry dismay and despair to the British colonies; and the reason that I rose is to give heart to the colonists, and if the mail is to carry out the debate to-morrow night, I would say, let the British colonies read and notice the coldness with which the speech of the noble Lord has been received, and let them contrast that with the enthusiastic cheers with which the sentiments of my hon. Friend the Member for the University of Oxford was received; and they would then learn to know that the edict of the British Minister is not the edict of the British people, or the edict of the British Legislature, and I can tell them also that it is not the proposal that will be carried out by this House. As I understood the announcement of the noble Lord, and the comments that have been made in the different speeches that have been delivered in a contrary sense, I argue that the verdict of this House, on Monday next, will be that the British colonies shall not be allowed to perish.

As to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I hope he will pardon me for saying, that after having heard it, I believe he mistook his trade, and that he should have been a special pleader at the bar. When he took up my right hon. Friend the Member for Stamford (Mr. Herries), on the ground that the Act of 1844 allowed slave-grown sugar to come into competition on the same terms as foreign free-grown sugar, I think that it was very like special pleading. The right hon. Gentleman surely must know that we could not prohibit the sugar of the United States, and of Venezuela, from entering this country on account of the obligations of special treaties; but as a proof of the pitiful extent to which this right was taken advantage of, I may state, that in 1845 there were 3,867 tons of foreign sugar consumed in this country. But how much of this was slave-grown sugar? Why, just three tons and a half. True it is, that in the course of time the argument of the right hon. Gentleman might have become applicable—it might be that the United States of America, availing themselves of their special treaties with this country, might have sent their slave-grown sugar here, and might have taken the sugar of Cuba and the Brazils for their own consumption. So also might Holland have taken the sugar of Brazil, and of the foreign West Indian possessions, and have sent her Java sugar here; but as yet that trick had not been had recourse to; and when it was resorted to, it would have been time enough for this House, and for the Parliament of England, to reconsider their policy and see if they could not meet such an unfair proceeding as it deserved. My hon. Friend the Member for Bristol (Mr. Philip Miles) referred to a despatch that had been within the last few days printed by order of this House, and that had been only laid before this House on the 9th of June. It is a despatch from Sir Charles Grey, the Governor of Jamaica; and my hon. Friend complained of the length of time that was allowed to elapse before that important document was placed in the hands of Members. But I have a graver charge to make—a charge against the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies. I tell the House that that despatch was received on the 27th of March; and I now ask, why was it held back from the Committee till their sittings were brought to an end? The hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies came before that Committee as a voluntary witness, and he then pretended to know nothing of any important despatch having been received from the colony of Jamaica, and yet this despatch had at that time been nine days at the Colonial Office.

Sir, it is a repetition of the trick played in the earlier part of the Session. The same thing was done in February in both Houses of Parliament, when on the Motion for a Committee in this House, and on that of bringing forward the whole question for consideration in the other branch of the Legislature, documents which had been a month in the hands of Government were held back until four hours after the debate was over in the House of Commons. The holding back of those despatches may have prevented and shortened debate and discussion at the moment, but I do not pretend to say that it had any material effect in this House, because the Motion for a Committee of Inquiry was acceded to in this House. But how different is the case as regards the withholding of a despatch of this importance from the Committee? And I ask, does the House not believe—does the country not believe, that if a despatch received from Governor Sir Charles Grey had been laid before the Committee, containing the opinions found in this despatch, recommending the very remedy finally carried by a narrow majority in the Committee, that such a despatch would not have had its weight in deciding the then trembling and doubtful result to which the Committee ultimately came? I must take the liberty of again reading the important passage in this despatch. Sir Charles Grey writing on the 21st of February, 1848, says—

"A permanent gazette price of less than 30*s*. the cwt. for West India muscovado, I firmly believe will cause the greater portion of the sugar cultivation of this island to be abandoned; and if I were to be called upon for a recommendation founded upon the most comprehensive and painstaking review of the whole subject which I am capable of making, it would be, that as far as still more important State affairs will permit, the duties on British muscovado should be brought towards the limit of 1*d.* per pound, and those on foreign to 2*d.*, liable to special relaxations in favour of such foreign States as should bind themselves by treaty to give a similar measure of justice to their labourers as we give to ours."

Why, Sir, in substance that was the remedy which I myself had first the honour to propose in the Committee. It was the remedy which, in a different shape, my hon. Friend the Member for Droitwich (Sir John Pakington) proposed; and which, in a still more reduced form, the hon. Baronet the Member for Liverpool (Sir Thomas Birch) succeeded in carrying. But think you not that if the evidence of the Governor of Jamaica had been laid before the Committee—whilst the decision of the Committee was trembling in the balance—that that decision would have been influenced by such a high recommendation? Do you not think the Committee would have decided by a large majority in favour of that recommendation? Now, what was the evidence of the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies before the Committee on the 5th of April, this despatch of Sir Charles Grey having been received in the Colonial Office on the 27th of March preceding? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Goulburn), asks the witness to explain the reason why we have no accounts in the papers laid before Parliament from Jamaica of the character of those from the other colonies? The answer appears to be—"I imagine you allude to the blue book, containing the general accounts from Jamaica; but those are despatches of a very general character." But that was not the question put to the hon. Gentleman by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge. The question put by Mr. Goulbourn was—"Can you explain the reasons why we have no accounts in the papers laid before Parliament from Jamaica of the character of those from the other colonies?" Well, Mr. Goulbourn follows up that question. He asks "Is there no account of the state of that island?" and he was then going on with his examination, but the examiner is cut short by the witness, who, not allowing the questioner to finish the sentence, interrupts him, saying, "That is generally comprised in the annual report called the blue book." But Mr. Goulburn, not satisfied, persists and asks, "Does not the Governor write despatches on the subject of the state of the island besides that one particular paper in the course of the year?" The answer of Mr. Hawes is, "Yes, certainly; but I am not aware of any despatch from him of any importance which has been withheld from this Committee." Why, I ask, was that despatch not of "any importance?" [Mr. HAWES: It is in the blue book, and it was not received at that time.] Yes, I say it was received, but was never laid before the Committee. [Mr. HAWES: Is it in the book?] Yes; it is in the book laid before Parliament on the 9th of June. [Mr. HAWES: Will the noble Lord state when he moved for it? let him look at the book in his hand.] The hon. Gentleman is trying to fence with me. He asks when I moved for it; I think I moved for it on the 8th of May, but what has that to do with the matter? When the hon. Gentleman was a witness before the Committee, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge asks another question:—

> "We have received, he says, from other colonies very considerable details as to the state of those colonies, and the prospects of the agriculturists; but from Jamaica I can find nothing."

What says the hon. Gentleman in reply? He says—

> "Until very recently I think there has been no such general despatch received; a despatch is now printing for this Committee, and I ought to add, that the Governor has been in the island a very short time."

He says there is a despatch, but still not of the nature to which the right hon. Gentleman alludes, and adds—"However, what we have will be furnished." That was on the 5th of April; but we continued sitting, and came to no vote whatever until the 22nd of May, eight weeks after the arrival of that despatch. Was Lord Palmerston so long in producing his despatches? No; they were submitted to us before we came to any conclusion, though they were of considerable length, and were received, not on the 27th of March, but so late as the 10th of May; that is, despatches were included down to the 10th of May; is not the reason clear why that despatch from Sir Charles Grey was kept back? It was on account of its very importance, and that is the grave charge I make against the hon. Gentleman. But it is all in perfect keeping with what was done in the earlier part of the Session. I took the liberty of examining the hon. Gentleman about those despatches that were withheld until February. Those despatches had arrived on the 3rd of January, but were not laid on the table of the House until the 4th of February. Well, Sir, what does the hon. Gentleman say in reference to them? My question was—

> "I wish to ask you how it has come about that those despatches, which were moved for on the 26th of November, were not laid on the table of the House of Commons until, I think, the 7th of February?"

He says, in reply—

> "All I have to say on the subject is this, that the despatches which were moved for were prepared for Parliament, and were ready to be laid on the table; but just before the meeting of Parliament fresh despatches of very great importance came to us. An effort was made to print them in time to deliver them with the others, but a delay arose over which we had no control, and that was the only cause of their being delivered a day but one after Parliament met."

But those despatches are marked Paper 62, and the latest despatch that arrived was on the 3rd of January, an entire month before the meeting of Parliament. And Earl Grey, in the other House, and the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in this House, held language and made statements which it was utterly impossible that either of them could have held or could have ventured to make if the House had been in possession of the despatches. Altogether, their statements were presented the day after the debate was over.

Well, then, I say that the sugar-planting interest has not had fair play in this transaction, and that it has not been intended that it should have fair play. When the Committee was appointed, and when there were put upon that Committee, consisting of fifteen Members, but three Members who had voted against the Sugar Act of 1846, no question could be raised as to the fairness and impartiality of that Committee; and when the noble Lord at the head of the Government —who I believe intended we should have fair play—and so I must also say of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, and of all the Members of the Committee—for never men sat together who were, I believe, more determined to elicit truth, and more resolved to throw no obstacle in the way of fair inquiry in that Committee, whatever might be their opinions on the subject—but I say I don't think when the noble Lord at the head of the Government requested that the terms of the Motion should be amended, and that the Motion, which originally stood merely for a "Committee of Inquiry into the condition and prospects of the sugar and coffee plantation interest in Her Majesty's East and West India possessions and the Mauritius, with a view to their relief," should have this addition, which at the request of the noble Lord was made—"to consider whether any and what measures could be adopted by Parliament for their relief"—the report of the Committee should have received the little attention which from the measures proposed to-night it appears to have gained from Her Majesty's Ministers. I think, after that long investigation, and when the Committee reported a resolution not propounded by the chairman, or by any Protectionist Member of the Committee—but a resolution proposed by as warm a friend of the Government and as warm a free-trader as any one in this House, Sir Thomas Birch—the report of that Committee should have been entitled to more attention. And I repeat again, that my conviction is, that instead of the narrow majority by which that resolution was carried, if that despatch of Sir Charles Grey had not been withheld at the critical moment for fifty-six days, the report of the Committee would have come out backed by the influence of a very considerable majority. It was to this point, as to the requisite amount of differential duty necessary to save the colonies, that for three months, I may say morning, evening, and night, we gave our study; and, fortified by such evidence as that of the Governor of Jamaica, without any concert, of course, with us, and himself a free-trader, I cannot doubt that the majority in that Committee would have been much greater, and would have had proportionably greater influence in the country; therefore, I have a right to prefer a grave charge against the Colonial Office for keeping back that important despatch. I shall not go at any length into this discussion this evening, as there is to be no result; but I would advise the noble Lord at the head of the Government not to trifle with these great colonies. I tell him not to peddle or huxter for one shilling or for eighteen pence a cwt., and balance that miserable sum with the loss of thess great colonies. Their inhabitants have been loyal to you in the worst of times. Those colonies have never wavered in their allegiance and loyalty; but their patience may have its limits; and I beg leave to say to the noble Lord, in the language of Burke, "that magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom, and a great empire and little minds go ill together."

Mr. HAWES said, he felt called upon to address a few observations to the House in consequence of the attack which had been made upon him. He begged leave to state that no despatch of any importance had been withheld from the knowledge of the Committee. If any delay had taken place in the production of the document which had been referred to, he would make an inquiry into the matter, and would acquaint the noble Lord with the result. The questions put to him by the right hon. Member for the University of Cambridge had reference solely to what was technically called the blue book; so, at least, he understood. That blue book he had not received to the present hour, and therefore he could not produce it before the Committee. As soon as the noble Lord moved for the despatches, they were put into the copyist's hands for the purpose of being printed; and, as far as he knew, no delay took place in laying them before the Committee. With respect to what the noble Lord said about the previous papers, there must, he apprehended, be some mistake. It was a question of dates, and he could not be expected to speak off-hand to it. He begged to state distinctly in his place in Parliament that he had no intention whatever to withhold information from the Committee; and further he believed that such a flood of information was never poured into a Committee on any previous occasion. Upon his honour he declared that he had no intention to withhold information from the Committee, and he was compelled to meet with some degree of indignation the unjust imputation which the noble Lord had thrown upon him. He would make inquiry into the matter, and take another opportunity of meeting the noble Lord on the subject; but again he must declare that he had no intention of keeping back information, in order to influence the decision of the Committee.

Mr. DISRAELI: Does the hon. Member mean to say that the despatch of Sir C. Grey was presented to the Committee, or that it was not? That is the question.

Mr. HAWES: The despatch was not called for at the time.

Lord G. BENTINCK: Yes, it was.

Mr. HAWES: No. The noble Lord will pardon me for contradicting him with the greatest possible courtesy; but the despatch was not called for, and my evidence shows that it was not. The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn subsequently moved for a great many despatches, which were put into the printer's hands, and, as far as I am aware, they were printed as speedily as possible.

Mr. DISRAELI: I will not dispute the hon. Member's right to speak again upon the subject, though I think he has not bettered his position by his interlocutory observations. The hon. Member being a witness before a Committee, was examined with respect to certain information which was supposed to be in the possession of the Government of which he was the organ; the hon. Member evades the question, and chooses to conceive that it refers to some routine report.

Mr. HAWES: The blue book was mentioned.

Mr. DISRAELI: Exactly so. The hon. Member being asked, I say, whether the Government was in possession of certain important information, gave the Committee to understand that it was not.

Mr. HAWES: I said that we had received some despatches.

Mr. DISRAELI: Yes, but they were of little importance, and therefore they were not produced. Of course you had received despatches. We know very well that no packet arrives without bringing despatches of some kind from your colonial Governors, but the inference to be drawn from your answer is that you had received no despatch containing information of any importance. Now, the question is, whether the despatch of Sir C. Grey contains information which is likely to have influenced the decision of the Committee—whether it would not have been an essential and vital element of the decision at which the Committee arrived? I speak only from memory, as the hon. Member does; but I certainly recollect that the right hon. Member for the University of Cambridge asked the hon. Member in this House, whilst the Committee was sitting, whether a despatch from Governor Sir G. Grey had not been received by the Government.

Mr. HAWES: The right hon. Member for the University of Cambridge is present, and I hope that he will put the hon. Member right upon this point. It is true that the right hon. Gentleman addressed several questions to me from to time, but they had reference to what is technically called the blue book, which contains a minute description of the state of the colonies, and my answer was that the blue book was not in our possession.

MR. GOULBURN: The hon. Member must have completely misunderstood the tenor of my questions. My object was to ascertain whether any information had been received from Governor Grey which could throw any light on the distressed state of the colony; and after the answers which I received from the hon. Gentleman, I must confess I was greatly surprised the other day at seeing in the papers presented to the House the important despatch of Sir C. Grey, recommending a plan for the relief of the planters.

MR. DISRAELI: I was speaking from memory; but the hon. Member thought proper to appeal to the right hon. Member for the University of Cambridge, whose answer has completely confirmed the accuracy of my recollection. If this had been the hon. Member's first Session in the House, what he has just done would not have much surprised me; but for a man of ability and considerable Parliamentary experience to wish the House to believe that a practised statesman, and a gentleman of great official aptitude like the right hon. Member for Cambridge University, would be perpetually asking him questions about a mere routine blue book, does, I confess, fill me with admiration. Could the hon. Member suppose that the right hon. Gentleman was so green a man as to ask about a blue book? I well remember that the right hon. Gentleman was always on the watch for the hon. Member about this matter like a hungry privateer on the look-out after a Spanish galleon. The countenance of the hon. Member, too, upon those occasions always betrayed considerable anxiety; and I cannot help thinking that if he had understood the right hon. Gentlemen's questions to refer merely to a blue book, he would have been much more at his ease than he seemed to be. But the question is, whether the statement of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn is just or not? Was there a most important document withheld from the knowledge of the Committee, which, if produced, would have effected a considerable change in the opinion of the Committee? That is the question, and all that has been said on the subject within the last few minutes entirely confirms the statement of the noble Lord. Doubtless that is not the opinion of the hon. Under Secretary for the Colonies; and I can easily conceive that after the answer of the right hon. Member for Cambridge University, the hon. Member is more enamoured of his opinion than ever; but I will leave him and the right hon. Gentleman to settle the matter between them. I have no wish to prolong this discussion, which was not to have been a discussion. And yet, after the speech of the noble Lord at the head of the Government, I think that, as the packet sails to-morrow. the proceedings of this night are, as far as the destinies of the colonies are concerned, more important than what may be done on Monday next. Why should there be any delay? Why should 48 or 24 hours elapse before we come to a decision upon the proposition of the Government? As far as I can ascertain, there is, with the exception of persons immediately connected with the Government, but one opinion entertained respecting it, namely, that it is at once the most paltry and most perilous scheme ever offered to the consideration of Parliament. It is paltry because it can do no good—perilous because it must do much harm. The Government might have adopted the decision of the Committee, which was given on the Motion of one of their own supporters, whose opinions generally on commercial theories they deem to be orthodox. If the Government had taken that course it would have been in their power to have effected the salvation of the colonies. It was also open to the Government to have given an honourable, and it may be a just, adhesion to the law of 1846. They have done neither. They have "paltered in a double sense"—on the one hand flirting with political economy, and on the other conquetting with protection. If the object of the Government were to conciliate both parties, they will certainly fail of success. I will leave Ministers to settle their differences with economists; but as the West India packet is to sail to-morrow, I think it desirable that it should carry the intelligence to the colonists, that this project of the Government has not been received by the House with the apathy which Ministers counted on; and that not only by Members on this side of the House, but also by the economists, faithful to the principles they profess, is it denounced as totally inadequate to meet the exigency of the case. In every sense, whether we look to the condition of the colonies or of this country, the proposition of the Government is de-void of all statesmanlike qualities. What is the question between the English people and the colonies? The English people, represented by the Parliament and the Government, entered into a contract with the sugar-growing colonies in 1834, by which we engaged, first, to give them a sum of money; secondly, to secure them the use of their labourers for a certain term of years; thirdly, to secure them during a certain time the immigration of new labourers; fourthly, to secure to them for a period the enjoyment of a market. Of these four conditions, England has violated and outraged three. The violation of the fourth stipulation by the law of 1846, is the proceeding which has been most fatal to the colonists. The noble Lord at the head of the Government has told us that he still adheres to the principle of the law of 1846. I want to know what the principle of the law of 1846 is? The noble Lord has not told us. It is said that the Act of 1846 is a law to secure cheap sugar to the people of England. There is a great complaint of taxation at present amongst the people. Why not apply a sponge to the national debt, and thus reduce taxation? By the same process of reasoning, and in accordance with the same high tone of morality, you might arrive at a fiscal result just as successful as the colonial catastrophe which you have accomplished. This being the state of the case—we having violated three out of four of the engagements into which we entered with the colonists — the noble Lord submits his plan to the House, then deprecates discussion, tells us that the packet is about to sail, and supposes that his proposition is to pass without eliciting any expression of indignation, unless it be that drawn from an Under Secretary for the Colonies, who feels himself excessively offended because he is called to account for not having produced a despatch which he ought to have produced. That is the only spark of feeling which has been elicited to-night. Not the least feeling is manifested with reference to a question which involves nothing less than the existence of the colonists and the outraged honour of the English people; but immense indignation is shown because a Member of Parliament calls the Under Secretary for the Colonies to account for not having produced a despatch. I want the question to be answered—why has not England fulfilled her contract with the West Indians? It is all very well for the hon. Member for Manchester to get up and speak of the advantage to his suffering constituents of cheap sugar. No doubt the hon. Member's constituents are suffering, as the colonists are suffering, and both from the same cause—vicious legislation. We told the hon. Member long ago that this would be the result of the course he was pursuing. The hon. Member and his friends have virtually had the government of the country in their hands during the last two or three years; they have been passing laws affecting the most important commercial interests—laws for regulating the administration of the colonies; and the result is, that they have produced in every quarter an amount of distress and depression never before equalled. When the colonists complain that they are ruined by your violation of the contracts into which you entered with them, is it an answer to say that you cannot fulfil your engagements because the hon. Member for Manchester's constituents are suffering? Doubtless both parties are suffering; but the country did not enter into engagements with the people of Manchester, and that made the difference between the two cases. Between England and her colonies a distinct contract is registered. Between the Parliament and Manchester there is no other bond than some fantastical legislation for which the hon. Member is himself responsible. There is one consideration which must never be omitted in dealing with this question. I do not believe that the West Indies will perish. When I see that their system has endured for some centuries—that a considerable degree of order and civilisation has been achieved—that much land has been brought into cultivation, notwithstanding your political economy and your perfidy—when I see this, I find it impossible to suppose that these islands will become absolutely barren and desolate. But what is the prospect? These colonies must be supported by metropolitan authority; they must depend upon some Power which will enable them to enjoy the rights of property, and to develop the sources of wealth which they possess, instead of allowing them to perish from the face of the earth. If we cannot do this for them, they will seek for a transatlantic Power that will do it. I ask you to consider what effect that would have on the empire of Great Britain. That is a political consideration which may not have entered into the minds of those who are looking only for cheap sugar; but it shows that the world is not to be governed merely by commercial principles, and that if you push too far your political economy, an element may arise to produce combinations which will destroy your power, and with it the commercial supremacy which it was your object to establish. What are you doing all this time? Are you securing cheap sugar, which, with unblushing front, you told the people was your chief object? I remember, when the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn, opposed the pernicious law of 1846, I ventured to say that before two years the Government would have to change it. I said then the history of the country was the history of reaction; and the noble Lord at the head of the Government got up, and, in a speech full of Habeas Corpus and the Bill of Rights, ridiculed this principle. Why, two years have not passed, and we have the noble Lord introducing a measure of reaction at this moment. We have him cobbling and patching up his famous law, which he carried in deference to a great principle. We have him deserting that great principle, without instituting in its place any other principle of power sufficient to make his legislation effective. What has been the effect of your legislation? Why, it has been this, as I told the noble Lord over and over again it would be, that you who are anti-monopolists—you who are the advocates of cheap sugar—have all along been establishing a differential duty in favour of Cuba and Brazil. Yes, it is the hon. Member for Manchester, who, speaking as if the greatness of this country depended upon the measure of 1846, and as if cheap sugar was the only consolation left to the people of England for all the legislative blunders that had been committed—it is he who virtually tells you that cheap sugar is now the sole solace for the sufferings of the people of this island. It is the hon. Member for Manchester, and his friends, who are the advocates of a differential duty in favour of Cuba and Brazil; who give an absolute and direct advantage, by legislation, to Cuba and Brazil; who make the Ministers (and who became Ministers by their dictation) sketch out a new scale of duties, by which to add to and favour the differential duties that already practically exist; it is, I say, the hon. Member for Manchester and his friends who are at this moment doing all this, and much more than this—for they will eventually establish a monopoly in favour of those two countries. The hon. Baronet the Member for the University of Oxford has with the most becoming feeling touched upon the moral blot of this case. Sir, in that regard, it is intolerable. If we could throw from our memories all that has passed in this country; if there were no House of Commons, if there were no Parliament, if, unfortunately, there were no reporters —then, indeed, we might get out of the scrape in which we are now involved. But we have had for forty years public meetings, for forty years platform orators, and for forty years Ministers of State advocating the abolition of slavery. These are traditions that cannot be forgotten by the people—never can they be forgotten by those who took so distinguished a part in the cause of emancipation—the Society of Friends. Talk to me, indeed, about the history of this country not being the history of reaction! When I see the hon. Member for Manchester (Mr. Bright) become the eloquent advocate of the importation of slave-grown sugar—when I see that hon. Member get up and tell us that the people of England are to look to the market which can supply them with the cheapest article, and are not to consider the means by which that article has been manufactured, or the circumstances under which it has been created—then I say, that is reaction under the most remarkable and flagrant circumstances. But is it the fact that this intelligence is to go forth to the colonists to-morrow, and are those our suffering fellow-subjects to suppose that England is so debased, so degraded, so demoralised, that it can submit to such legislation and to such legislators without a struggle? I cannot believe it. Let not this measure—this remedial measure of the Minister—be allowed to pass with ease and *sub silentio*. Let us show this case in all its hideous features to the people of this country. They may be suffering; I don't deny it. You have been doing all you could for the last five years to make them suffer. The colonists are suffering also, perhaps more severely than the people of England; and, though I more immediately advocate the interests of the colonists on this question, yet I am not insensible to the sufferings of our fellow-subjects in this country; but I repeat it, there is this difference between the position of the colonists and the working people of Yorkshire and Lancashire, that you have entered into a specific contract with the colonists, but you have not done so with the people of Yorkshire or Lancashire. Let, then, the colonists know that there are still some persons in the House of Commons who are not blind to the grossness of our legislative conduct in this matter; and let the people out of this House have time to think and pause upon these strange circumstances. They have been told for the last four years that they were upon the eve of a period of unparalleled prosperity—every loom and every spindle was to be in full activity, and every church and every chapel was to be full. Have these visions of prophecy been fulfilled? No; but then some very extraordinary circumstances have occurred. Yes, everything is accounted for. Extraordinary circumstances have arrived that have prevented that prosperity which was foretold and promised both for England and the colonies. Why, that, Sir, was the whole point of our argument. We always told you, that you were dealing only with abstract theories, and that when you brought your principles into play you would have to encounter numerous obstacles which you did not anticipate, and to struggle with difficulties which you did not foresee. But you persevered and passed your laws, without even making an attempt to adapt them to a single case of exception. But you say, there are extraordinary circumstances occurring in the world. There is war. But you said, there never would be war. You said, "Pass our laws, give us free trade, of which the measure of 1846 was the completing act, and there never will be any disturbing circumstances more; we shall always enjoy peace; our principles are so powerful that they will overcome all obstacles." And when we just intimated the possible occurrence of circumstances that might lead to war, you told us that war would never occur. But now you have war, discontent, and disorder. There exists, also, according to your own confession, unparalleled suffering on the part of the people of England; and the state of the colonies by your legislation is so intolerable that the Government themselves—they who introduced the Bill of 1846—have within the space of a short two years been obliged to bring forward a remedial measure. Is it possible to conceive an occurrence of a public nature more full of instruction, or one calculated to produce a greater impression on the public mind, than this proposition of the Minister? I have not the slightest doubt as to the effect which it will have, as far as the people of England are concerned; — I have not the least doubt that when they who, according to the hon. Member for Manchester and his friends, are the most sensible, the most energetic, and the most calm-minded persons in the world, hear of this proposition, they will begin to consider what they are to think of this new commercial system, which was consummated in 1846, and which in 1848 has completely broken down. I have not the slightest doubt that these things will produce the greatest effect on the people of England; especially when those other circumstances occur to which the hon. Member for Manchester so delightedly alluded—when we have a free-trade price of corn, and when we have all that agricultural distress which the hon. Member described with so much unction, and over the anticipation of which he gloated with so much feeling; when we have that agricultural distress and those free-trade prices—when we have, consentaneous with commercial depression and colonial ruin, a total want of business throughout the country—(for all this is the necessary consequence of that state of war which the hon. Member said never could occur)—I have no doubt that then, under such circumstances, the people of this country will awake at last to a conviction of the blunders they have tolerated, and to a full sense of the false system of which they have been the fond supporters. But, after all, the people of this country have great resources; they have powerful political friends, who by their talents and eloquence are able to sustain their cause; they have the wisdom of Parliament to solace them; but what is the state of the colonists? You have been tampering with them and with their interests for the last forty years. You have been passing law after law to break their spirit and destroy their capital. They have nothing to fall back upon—and even when the packet is waiting to carry out to them intelligence from this country, a proposition under these circumstances is brought forward by the Government, which we are told we must not discuss, and that it is not expected that we should now give an opinion upon it. I shall be ready hereafter to give my opinion upon it most unquestionably; and, although I do not suppose it will carry much weight, yet, as far as my voice and the influence of my opinion extends, I wish my fellow-subjects in the colonies to have at least the consolation of knowing that I delivered my protest as indignant as ever did an Under Secretary of State against a measure, brought forward, I believe, under circumstances unprecedented in this country, with regard to colonial legislation, miserably feeble in its conception, and leading, as I believe it will lead, to dreadful disappointment and unparalleled failure.

LORD J. RUSSELL: In stating to the House the proposition which I made this evening, I ventured to ask the House to follow the course usual in cases of this nature—that of waiting to another day, and that only after two days' interval—before they gave an opinion upon the subject; but hon. Gentlemen have not adopted that course. My hon. Friend the Member for the University of Oxford, and the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down—each has made his comment with regard to the principle, and also with regard to the general purport and effect of the measure. Now, I must first take notice of what has been said by the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, because I think he has shown pretty clearly what is the nature of the debate, and of the decision to which this House is to come on Monday. He says, that the reaction which he prophesied in 1846 has come to pass; and he explained that reaction by saying that the new commercial principles received their completion in 1846, and now, in 1848, we were to witness their entire overthrow. He foresaw and predicted that the corn laws would be re-enacted—that new duties would be imposed—and that all those commercial principles which have received the sanction of this House during the last seven years are to be overthrown by the decision of Parliament in this and future Sessions. Now, I think the House may see from this what are the expectations of the hon. Gentleman, and with what views he will receive the proposition made by the Committee of which the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn was chairman. I had not a clear understanding, until I heard the speeches of the hon. Gentleman who spoke last, and of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stamford (Mr. Herries), what their object precisely was. I had supposed that they meant that there was to be a 10*s.* differential duty for a period of six years, and then that that duty was to expire, and the duty on colonial and foreign sugar should be equal. That was a proposition to which I should have objected on account of the burden which it would have imposed on the consumer; but at the same time it would not have been very different in principle from the measure of 1846 itself. It would have been coming to an equalisation duty in the end. But the right hon. Gentleman has explained that his object is to restore protection altogether; to make the introduction of any foreign sugar subject to such a differential duty as to render it difficult for the people of this country to consume it; and finally, to give to the colonies a permanent protection to a certain amount. That is the way, we are told, and the only way, by which the prosperity of the colonies can be secured. I am not sorry to have learned this, because it shows what will be the measure we shall have to discuss, and what will be the proposition the House will have to decide upon, namely, the proposition of the Government on the one hand, having in view the maintaining of the Act of 1846, and the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman on the other side, which is, that there should be a permanent differential duty of 10*s.* per cwt., thereby laying a very considerable tax upon the people of this country. My hon. Friend the Member for the University of Oxford expressed his great indignation that I had not touched upon the question of slavery. Why, I really thought that the whole of my speech was an attempt to show that the measure would enable the British colonists, with their free labour, to compete with the sugar of slave colonies belonging to other countries. If I did that—and if I proposed a measure which would be successful in attaining that object—I thought I should so far be giving encouragement to the growth of free-labour sugar, and discouragement to the growth of slave-labour sugar. With respect to the question whether the measure was sufficient for that object, that is another matter altogether; but the object I had in view was, I repeat, to encourage free-labour sugar, and discourage slave-labour sugar. No person, I think, could doubt this who heard me. In point of fact, the very proposal, as I at first understood it, that was made by the right hon. Gentleman—viz., the imposition of a differential duty of 10*s.* for six years, would have a similar object in view to that proposed by myself. It would have the object of enabling the British colonists, with a sufficiency of free labour, to supply sugar cheaply, and thereby compete with advantage and success against the slave colonies. But I must confess—and after all I have heard, I almost feel humbled in confessing it—that I thought there were two parties whose interest I was to keep in view in framing any measure on this subject—the one party was the great mass of the population in our colonies, amounting to 9-10ths of the people of those colonies, who for the greater part had formerly been our negro slaves; and the other body of persons whose interests I conceived I was to consult, and who were about some 99-100ths of the population, were the people of this country, who were deeply interested in the price of the article of sugar, for which they pay 12,000,000*l.* sterling a year, and of which they consume about 300,000 tons, or 6,000,000 cwt. annually. Now, though the question was difficult, and though I did not pretend to frame a measure which would press with any extreme force either on the one hand or the other, yet I conceived that, with regard to those two great bodies, I had not been unsuccessful. It appears by evidence that the negroes of the West India colonies since the abolition of slavery have been in the best condition. They have had the best food, and been in all respects better clothed and provided for than any peasantry in the world. There was a resolution passed by a Committee in 1842 declaring that the measure of emancipation had completely succeeded so far as the welfare of the negroes was concerned. I believe the noble Lord the Member for Lynn moved a similar resolution on a subsequent occasion. We have it in evidence that the negroes were able to indulge in the luxury of dress, which they carried to an almost ridiculous excess. Some were known to have dress worth 50*l.* I mention this to show their ability to afford these indulgences. Now, I believe that even if this measure were to discourage the cultivation of sugar—if a great part of the negroes were not again employed in the growth of sugar, still there are means enough in the West Indies for their support, and the effect of emancipation would be, that from being wretches doomed to work compulsorily under the lash of their masters, it has converted them into an independent, a happy, and comfortable peasantry. In that respect, therefore, there is nothing in my measure which militated against their welfare. With regard to another part—that of proposing that sugar which was now paying 14*s.* a cwt. should be diminished to 10*s.*, and that foreign free-labour sugar should be diminished to 10*s.*, which tax scarcely exceeds one penny a pound—I did conceive that we were providing for the welfare and benefit of that other great body whose interest we were bound to consult—I mean the people of this country. But it appears from the course which this debate has taken that the welfare of 9-10ths of the people of the West Indies is not the matter we are to regard; and that the welfare of 99-100ths of the people of the United Kingdom is not a matter we are to take the least interest in; but that the proprietors and owners of West Indian property—those who inherit estates in the colonies, or those who have purchased them, and in many cases only some five or six years ago—that these are the only persons for whose welfare this House is to show any concern. Now, I confess myself somewhat comforted by that discovery; for I must have been either very greatly wrong in proposing as the object of legislation the welfare of the two great masses of the community, or else those who have hitherto taken a part in this debate are exceedingly mistaken in their view as to what is the duty of this House in relation to the millions whose welfare is entrusted to their care. But, Sir, there is one great authority upon this subject I was very much surprised to find arrayed in such hostility against the present measure. The proposal of the Committee was 10*s.* for six years. Many persons stated their wishes to me, that the 10*s.* duty should be for a much longer period. Now I have consulted the evidence of Mr. Barkly, and I find that he thought that any long period would lead to the most calamitous consequences. He was of opinion that it would tend very much to injure both the labourers and employers. He said, that if protection of 10*s.* was given for two years, it would be very useful in reviving industry; but that if that duty were continued it would have the worst effects. [Mr. Barkly: Will you have the kindness to state what I said? I spoke of 10*s.* a cwt. for ten years.] Yes, the hon. Gentleman says that if there were a protection of 10*s.* a cwt., to continue for something like ten years, several of his friends think that would be useful; but he says — "I do not think that it would put us in a better position at the end of that time than we are in now;" and I know in one place he states positively that he thinks that 10*s.* ought not to be continued for more than two years. "I see," he says, "if the period were only two years, the competition for labour would be less intense than if it were ten." But here come two answers very remarkable, both as to the actual fact and as to what Mr. Barkly anticipates. The question is put—

> "The effect of giving 10*s*. protection would be to give you a better price for your sugar?"

The answer is—

> "It would raise the price of sugar 4*s*. a cwt. in this market."

That is a very clear answer as to the positive effect of giving the additional duty. He does not say that it would be compensated by such an increase in our colonies that the price would in fact be lower; he admits very fairly that the price of sugar would be increased 4*s*. a cwt.; and, of course, the effect of giving that protection is just the effect of having a tax of 4*s*. a cwt., only that in the one instance it goes to the proprietor, and in the other it is paid into the Exchequer; for the consumer the effect is exactly the same. The next question is—

> "The effect of giving you a better price for your sugar. you think, would be that the labourers in the colonies would demand an increase of wages up to that point?"

His answer is—

> "Not only would they demand it, but the planters themselves would be disposed to give it; the planters are not free agents exactly, they are men with encumbrances, which they have to provide the means of diminishing if they can, therefore their great object is to make sugar at any cost; and that has been one of the great causes of the high wages. If all the proprietors had been on the spot, wages would not have been so high. But if the protection were to continue for a very limited period, I do not think that would have the effect of impeding a reduction of wages."

The hon. Gentleman clearly was of opinion that 10*s*. for ten years would very much increase the wages, and so the proprietors would not in effect gain; and the reason was, that they are not their own masters, but would be forced to enter into this expensive and, to them, injurious competition. I should have thought, then, when the hon. Gentleman says that 10*s*. for two years would be good, but for ten years would be very injurious, and when our proposition is a protection for six years, though not to the amount of 10*s*., that at least he would not have met such a proposition with such unmeasured attack and reproach. But the question which the House will have to decide is, what I have stated with respect to this proposition of 10*s*. protecting duty. A 10*s*. protecting duty, as I conceive, while it would be a very serious tax on the people of this country, would lead, as the hon. Gentleman says, to those very high and extravagant wages; and, instead of putting the proprietors into a good position, in the end the whole of what would otherwise be their profit would be consumed by this competition for labour and the very high wages they would give. I believe, therefore, that a 10*s*. duty, while it would not be a real benefit to the labourer, would be injurious to that very class for whose benefit it is proposed, and who are the only persons that it is thought would profit by this tax. The hon. Member for Montrose (Mr. Hume) has declared likewise against the proposition of the Government; and, as I understand him, he is not content with suspending the scale of protection which at present exists, but he would propose an increase of protection—a higher protection than now exists, for the purpose of saving the colonies. Now, I think, among other objections to such a scheme, that one of those gentlemen to whom I referred in my opening statement has given a conclusive reason against such a proposition, I allude to Mr. Innes, who, I believe, is a Protectionist. He is a gentleman who has formed a very good judgment with respect to the state of opinion in this country, and he says in substance—

> "I should be very sorry to see protection re-enacted in this country, because I think the colonists would have no certainty that that law would not be changed in a year or two; there would be a perpetual struggle and perpetual uncertainty—there would be no security for capital—it would be only continuing an effort on the one part to maintain protection, and on the other to overthrow it, which is most injurious."

I think that opinion perfectly reasonable; and my belief is, that if this House should unfortunately agree to raise the protection for sugar—to make it 10*s*. instead of that which we propose—the effect would be a renewed struggle; that there would not be that successful reaction to which the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire looks; but that all those who have been for free trade in corn—all those who have been for a diminution of import duties—would struggle again for a diminution of this duty—would struggle to free the people of the United Kingdom from a tax which would be found so onerous to them. I have heard hon. Gentlemen say to-night, "What is a penny per pound?" The noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) says he proposes a reduction of duty. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer, naturally, would not be willing to see any very great loss of revenue; there would be upwards of 900,000*l*. of revenue sacrificed. If the noble Lord were to have a 10*s*. duty on colonial sugar, with a 20*s*.

duty on foreign, he must remember that the people, not having the benefit of the 10*s.* duty—because with the increased consumption now going on they would have to pay an increased price—the consequence must be a diminution of consumption, and therefore a diminution of revenue. It is all very well to say, as some of the witnesses before this Committee would say, "What a great consumption you have had! The West India colonies—the British possessions—can fully supply that, and you may as well take it from them only." But they entirely forget that this great increase of consumption has been owing to the diminution of price; that it is the diminution of price, and that only, which has caused the great increase of consumption. The increase of consumption has been 80,000 tons in the course of three years; but if you were to say you would re-establish protection, and endeavour to make sugar dear, you would find that increased consumption immediately fall off, and there would be a turn the other way, and a diminution of consumption. It is wonderful how sensitive the market is in this respect, and how a small increase of price makes a considerable diminution of consumption; showing that to the great mass of the people it is a consideration that there is a difference, not of a penny, but a halfpenny or a farthing, in an article, which many of them are not able to afford. I have felt obliged to make these remarks by the length to which this debate has extended. I shall be ready on Monday to defend the plan which we have proposed, as a plan which, giving, as I think, to the West India proprietor greater advantage than he has now, is at the same time not injurious to the revenue. I am perfectly aware that such a plan is liable to be called paltry and peddling, and of no value; but I am convinced that, upon a question of this kind, it would not be wise in us to go either to one extreme or the other. I should think an immediate abolition of the present differential duties as unwise a measure as a great increase of protection. We propose that the differential duties shall altogether cease in six years, and we give in the meantime what I think is a reasonable and moderate advantage to the West Indies. My object is, as I have stated, that the great mass of the people, both in the West Indies and in this country, may have justice done them; that free labour may be able to compete successfully with slave labour; and, believing that it will be so, I shall with confidence on Monday submit these propositions to the House.

Ordered—"That the House on Monday resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House to consider the Act of the 9th and 10th Victoria."

THE NAVIGATION LAWS.

On the Motion that the Speaker do leave the chair, for the House to resolve itself into Committee on the Navigation Laws,

Mr. HERRIES expressed a hope that the Motion would not be pressed that night. Many Gentlemen wished to take part in the debate, and several were absent, not expecting it on.

After some conversation,

The House divided:—Ayes 119; Noes 32: Majority 87.

List of the Ayes.

Adair, H. E.
Adderley, C. B.
Aglionby, H. A.
Alcock, T.
Armstrong, Sir A.
Armstrong, R. B.
Bellew, R. M.
Berkeley, hon. Capt.
Bernal, R.
Blewitt, R. J.
Bowring, Dr.
Boyd, J.
Brotherton, J.
Bruce, Lord E.
Buller, C.
Bunbury, E. H.
Burke, Sir T. J.
Campbell, hon. W. F.
Carew, W. H. P.
Chaplin, W. J.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.
Clifford, H. M.
Cocks, T. S.
Courtenay, Lord
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Devereux, J. T.
Duke, Sir J.
Dundas, Adm.
East, Sir J. B.
Egerton, Sir P.
Elliot, hon. J. E.
Evans, J.
Fordyce, A. D.
Forster, M.
Fox, W. J.
Freestun, Col.
Gladstone, rt. hn. W. E.
Glyn, G. C.
Goulburn, right hon. H.
Grace, O. D. J.
Granger, T. C.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Grosvenor, Lord R.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Hawes, B.
Hay, Lord J.
Hayter, W. G.
Headlam, T. E.
Henry, A.
Hindley, C.
Hobhouse, T. B.
Hume, J.
Keogh, W.
Kershaw, J.
King, hon. P. J. L.
Labouchere, rt. hon. H.
Lewis, G. C.
Lincoln, Earl of
Loch, J.
Lushington, C.
Macnaghten, Sir E.
M'Gregor, J.
Maher, N. V.
Martin, J.
Martin, S.
Matheson, Col.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Melgund, Visct.
Milner, W. M. E.
Mitchell, T. A.
Moffatt, G.
Monsell, W.
Morgan, H. K. G.
Morison, Sir W.
Morris, D.
Mulgrave, Earl of
O'Brien, J.
Paget, Lord A.
Pearson, C.
Perfect, R.
Peto, S. M.
Philips, Sir G. R.
Pigott, F.
Pinney, W.
Pugh, D.
Raphael, A.
Reynolds, J.
Ricardo, J. L.
Ricardo, O.
Romilly, Sir J.

Russell, Lord J.
Russell, hon. E. S.
Rutherfurd, A.
Seymer, H. K.
Seymour, Sir H.
Shafto, R. D.
Sheil, rt. hon. R. L.
Shelburne, Earl of
Somerville, rt.hn.SirW.
Spearman, H. J.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Strickland, Sir G.
Sullivan, M.
Talfourd, Serj.
Tancred, H. W.
Tennent, R. J.
Thompson, Col.
Thornely, T.
Towneley, C.
Trelawny, J. S.
Villiers, hon. C.
Vivian, J. H.
Ward, H. G.
Watkins, Col.
Westhead, J. P.
Wood, rt. hon. Sir C.
Wood, W. P.
Wortley, rt. hon. J. S.
Wyld, J.

TELLERS.

Tufnell, H.
Hill, Lord M.

List of the Noes.

Arkwright, G.
Baines, M. T.
Baring, T.
Benett, J.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Broadley, H.
Bruce, C. L. C.
Burrell, Sir C. M.
Christy, S.
Disraeli, B.
Fuller, A. E.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Herries, rt. hon. J. C.
Hildyard, R. C.
Hotham, Lord
Johnstone, Sir J.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Lockhart, W.
Martin, C. W.
Masterman, J.
Moore, G. H.
O'Brien, Sir L.
Renton, J. C.
Robinson, G. R.
Sandars, G.
Stephenson, R.
Stuart, J.
Thompson, Ald.
Thornhill, G.
Tyrell, Sir J. T.
Villiers, hon. F. W. C.
Vyse, H. R. H.

TELLERS.

Newdegate, C. N.
Henley, J. W.

House in Committee.

Resolutions read.

MR. J. STUART must express his regret at the course the Government had thought fit to pursue on this subject. It was agreed on all hands that this was a question of enormous importance. He (Mr. Stuart) considered that the Government had acted most improperly in trying to force on the discussion of this subject, and begged to move that the Chairman do now report progress, and on that question he would divide.

After a short debate,

On the question that the Chairman do report progress:—Ayes 48; Noes 144: Majority 96.

List of the Ayes.

Anstey, T. C.
Archdall, Capt.
Arkwright, G.
Baldock, E. H.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Boldero, H. G.
Broadley, H.
Buck, L. W.
Burrell, Sir C. M.
Cobbold, J. C.
Davies, D. A. S.
Disraeli, B.
Dundas, G.
Edwards, H.
Filmer, Sir E.
Fuller, A. E.
Gwyn, H.
Halsey, T. P.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Henley, J. W.
Herries, rt. hon. J. C.
Hildyard, R. C.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hood, Sir A.
Hotham, Lord
Hudson, G.
Ingestre, Visct.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Knox, Col.
Lockhart, W.
Masterman, J.
Miles, W.
Moore, G. H.
Morgan, O.
Neeld, J.
Palmer, R.
Renton, J. C.
Repton, G. W. J.
Robinson, G. R.
Sandars, G.
Somerset, Capt.
Spooner, R.
Stephenson, R.
Thompson, Ald.
Trollope, Sir J.
Tyrell, Sir J. T.
Villiers, hon. F. W. C.
Vyse, R. H. R. H.
Walsh, Sir J. B.

TELLERS.

Stuart, J.
Newdegate, C. N.

List of the Noes.

Adair, H. E.
Adair, R. A. S.
Adderley, C. B.
Aglionby, H. A.
Alcock, T.
Anson, hon. Col.
Armstrong, Sir A.
Armstrong, R. B.
Arundel and Surrey Earl of
Bagshaw, J.
Bellew, R. M.
Berkeley, hon. Capt.
Bouverie, hon. E. P.
Bowring, Dr.
Boyd, J.
Boyle, hon. Col.
Brotherton, J.
Bruce, Lord E.
Buller, C.
Campbell, hon. W. F.
Carew, W. H. P.
Carter, J. B.
Childers, J. W.
Christy, S.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.
Clifford, H. M.
Cobden, R.
Cocks, T. S.
Coke, hon. E. K.
Courtenay, Lord
Craig, W. G.
Dalrymple, Capt.
Devereux, J. T.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Duff, G. S.
Duke, Sir J.
Dundas, Adm.
Ebrington, Visct.
Elliot, hon. J. E.
Estcourt, J. B. B.
Evans, J.
Fordyce, A. D.
Forster, M.
Fox, W. J.
Freestun, Col.
Glyn, G. C.
Grace, O. D. J.
Granger, T. C.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Haggitt, F. R.
Hallyburton, Lord J. F.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Hastie, A.
Hawes, B.
Hay, Lord J.
Hayter, W. G.
Headlam, T. E.
Heneage, E.
Henry, A.
Hindley, C.
Hobhouse, T. B.
Hollond, R.
Howard, hon. C. W. G.
Hume, J.
Jervis, Sir J.
Keogh, W.
Kershaw, J.
King, hon. P. J. L.
Labouchere, rt. hon. H.
Lascelles, hon. W. S.
Lewis, G. C.
Lincoln, Earl of
Locke, J.
M'Gregor, J.
Maher, N. V.
Martin, J.
Martin, S.
Matheson, A.
Matheson, Col.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Melgund, Visct.
Milner, W. M. E.
Mitchell, T. A.
Monsell, W.
Morgan, H. K. G.
Morpeth, Visct.
Morris, D.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Mulgrave, Earl of
O'Brien, J.
Ogle, S. C. H.
Paget, Lord A.
Paget, Lord G.
Palmerston, Visct.
Parker, J.
Perfect, R.
Peto, S. M.
Pigott, F.
Pinney, W.
Pugh, D.
Pusey, P.
Raphael, A.
Reynolds, J.
Ricardo, J. L.
Ricardo, O.
Rich, H.
Robartes, T. J. A.
Romilly, Sir J.
Russell, Lord J.
Russell, hon. E. S.
Rutherfurd, A.
Scully, F.
Seymer, H. K.
Sheil, rt. hon. R. L.
Shelburne, Earl of

Simeon, J.
Smith, rt. hon. R. V.
Somerville, rt. hon. Sir W.
Spearman, H. J.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Strickland, Sir G.
Stuart, Lord D.
Sullivan, M.
Talbot, C. R. M.
Talfourd, Serj.
Tancred, H. W.
Tennent, R. J.
Thompson, Col.
Thornely, T.
Towneley, C.
Towneley, J.
Townshend, Capt.
Trelawny, J. S.
Turner, G. J.
Tynte, Col.
Vivian, J. H.
Ward, H. G.
Watkins, Col.
Westenra, hon. J. C.
Westhead, J. P.
Wilson, M.
Wood, rt. hon. Sir C.
Wood, W. P.
Wortley, rt. hon. J. S.

TELLERS.

Tufnell, H.
Hill, Lord M.

Some further discussion having ensued, chiefly of a personal and party description, the House then resumed, and the Chairman reported progress.

Committee to sit again.

House adjourned at a quarter past Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, June 19, 1848.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—1° Commons Inclosure Bill.

Petitions Presented. From the Presbytery of Strathbogie, for the Amendment of the Present System of Granting Spirit Licences in Scotland.—From Ipswich, and King's Lynn, for the Adoption of Measures for Suppression of Seduction and Prostitution.—From Rye, complaining of the State of the Turnpike Trusts in England and Wales.—From Westminster, for the Better Observance of the Sabbath.—From Stirling, and a great number of other Places, against the Marriage (Scotland) Bill, and the Registering Births (Scotland) Bill.

THE RAILWAY GAUGE.

Lord REDESDALE asked whether it was the intention of the Railway Commissioners to oppose the introduction into any private Bill of any provisions for altering the gauge of any railway authorised to be constructed by any Act which had passed prior to the passing of the Gauge Act in 1846; whether they proposed to bring in a Bill in the present Session to alter and amend the Gauge Act; and whether any report had been prepared by them upon the subject, or whether they intended to recommend that the consideration of the same should be postponed to the next Session of Parliament?

Earl GRANVILLE replied, that clauses for the alteration of the gauge had been introduced into two or three Bills in the House of Commons, which it was the intention of the Railway Commissioners to oppose; that it was not the intention of the Commissioners to introduce any Bill this Session for the alteration of the Gauge Act; but that the question of a mixed gauge was under consideration, and that its decision would depend upon the result of an experiment which was about to be tried on one of the lines.

DRAINAGE WORKS IN IRELAND.

Lord FARNHAM, before putting the question of which he had given notice relative to the discontinuance of the drainage works in the county of Cavan, and the dismissal of the labourers employed thereon, wished to make a few prefatory remarks. Their Lordships were aware that during the last few years very extensive schemes of drainage had been set on foot in Ireland. One of these was connected with the drainage of the rivers tributary to the Erne, in the north of Ireland. This work extended nearly thirty miles in the county of Cavan, and had given employment to 3,500 persons. It was strictly of a reproductive character. It was a grand national object, intended to connect that part of the country with Belfast to the north, through the Ulster canal; and, through the Shannon, with Limerick to the south, and calculated to drain 30,000 acres of land, flooded, on the average, during eight months in the year. He regretted to state that on Saturday, the 10th inst., the Board of Works issued an order, through their officers, that the works upon seven of the tributary streams should be stopped, and the consequence was that upwards of 2,000 persons, without one moment's notice, had been dismissed from their employment. He was unwilling to trespass long on their Lordships' attention, but could not avoid making one or two remarks on this most appalling subject. In the first place, he must observe that the character of the works on which these poor men were engaged was highly reproductive. The Government, by laying out the money in the first instance, would have had the money repaid to them by instalments. This was, too, the best time of the year, as their Lordships were aware, for persons employed in such works. They had to remove obstructions in rivers, to cut canals in low lands, which at other seasons of the year were flooded. But the most important feature in the case, and that which induced him to bring the matter before their Lordships in the most forcible manner, was the circumstance of the peculiar time at which the dismissal of so large a number of men had taken place. This was the time of the year when even, under ordinary circumstances (and when they were not subjected to the destitution and distress from which the people had suffered for two years, and by which they had been overwhelmed), it was most difficult to obtain employment —namely, between the sowing season and the harvest; the time between April and August. For labourers or small farmers it was most difficult in all years, but now impossible, to obtain livelihood in these months. There was, however, another circumstance which rendered the dismissal of these persons at the present moment a most cruel act. Their Lordships would scarcely credit him when he stated, that since the 12th of December last two rates, one of *5s.*, and the other of 3*s.* 4*d.*, had been struck in the poor-law union of Cavan; making altogether a poor-law rating of 8*s.* 4*d.* within five months upon a most distressed and impoverished district. Now, if the persons to whom he had alluded were thrown wholly out of employment, where were they to look for a subsistence? Landed property is already completely overwhelmed with the operation of the present poor-law system; and he would ask how a third rate could by possibility be enforced, for the maintenance of the men thus suddenly and cruelly dismissed from the works, and for the support of their families? In all years, it is most difficult for the tenant to pay his rent during the spring half year; but at the present period the farmer has neither crops nor cattle to meet this demand, and his utter inability to bear the superadded weight of increased poor-rates must be apparent to all. The landed proprietor feels, too, most severely the unequal pressure of this burthen; which, if it continues unchecked, must produce the necessary result of his diminishing his staff of labour, and thus tend to add a still greater accumulation to the mass of misery to which there is now no means of giving adequate relief. These persons, forming so large a body, being thrown out of employ, they could not look to another rate being made in addition to the two rates already struck. But he much feared that, impoverished as the country was, from the highest to the lowest or humblest classes, it would be utterly impossible to raise even the rate which had been last made. How these men were to subsist he could not tell. They could not starve; and here, perhaps, he might be excused if he told their Lordships what was the character of these men. They had invariably conducted themselves as honest, industrious, and peaceful men—as the lower orders of the Irish always do, when they have got employment, and are not made the tools of designing agitators. He was himself constantly resident in this part of the country, and had watched the conduct of the men engaged in this employment. They had carried the statement of their grievances to him, thinking that he had the power—as he had the wish, certainly—to restore them to their work. Six hundred of these unfortunate but deserving men, being one-fourth of the whole number, had memorialised himself and also other landed proprietors. With the permission of the House, he would read the memorial to their Lordships:—

> "They were supporting families to the amount of 2,500 persons; that they were now, in consequence of the drainage works being stopped, thrown idle, and their families left in a state of the most extreme destitution, there being no labour doing in the country, and they being denied relief from the poor-law guardians. The petitioners appealed to the engineer under whom they worked to show that they were ever willing to earn support for their families at any rate of wages he gave them, and that while employed they conducted themselves in the most peaceable manner, not minding the politics that were talked of, and living free from the disturbances that often occurred on such works. Under these circumstances, the memorialists begged him (Lord Farnham) and the other gentry of the place to use their influence, which they had always been ready to do in the cause of charity, to have the drainage works continued at least through the next three months, that the petitioners might be able to save their families from death by starvation, which was inevitable if some employment was not afforded."

To this memorial a statement was appended, signed by the Lord Bishop of Kilmore and the resident magistrates of the district, stating that " the sudden dismissal of so many persons is an act of great hardship, and will necessarily be attended with great distress." In conclusion, the noble Lord said, he had every confidence that the case which he had laid before their Lordships would meet with the favourable consideration of the noble Marquess opposite, and of his noble Friend at the head of the Irish Government, and he knew they would do all they could to raise money to continue in employment the full number of those unfortunate but deserving men. He might further state, that during the whole time these men had been employed on the public works, there had not been brought to the sessions a single case of any individual having stolen a farthing's worth of property of any description; no person had committed the slightest outrage, no mischief had ever been done to the property of any gentlemen or farmers through whose lands these works ran. He could not answer for the consequence to these men and their families if they should not be restored to their employment. It was unreasonable to expect that men, wasted by disease themselves, and seeing their wives and children dying of starvation, fever, or dysentery, could submit to such misery without a murmur. He greatly feared, from this wholesale dismissal of the labourers, serious consequences to the peace of the country. Many of them had been earning from 2½*d.* to 6*d.* a day, having strength and inclination to work at any price. But if they should be overtaken by famine and fever, they would no longer be able to work, and must perish. He would call upon the Government, in the strongest possible terms, to advance the money required to continue these works, which, as he had before stated, could not fail to be highly reproductive. The money would be sooner or later indispensably required. If the Treasury could not command it, it would be better for them to raise it at once. It would be far better, on every account, to provide the necessary sum for carrying on immediately the whole of the works which had been suspended, and giving employment in reproductive labour to a large class of people, able and willing to work—having their strength unwasted and their energies unimpaired—than to be obliged hereafter to dole out a still larger sum in aid of oppressive and overwhelming poor-rates, which it would be useless to impose, because impossible to collect them from a wretched and distressed population, their bodies wasted by disease, and their minds filled with discontent, and embittered by the miseries they had suffered. Should Government accede to his request, he would venture to insure to them that reward which, next to the approbation of their own consciences, would prove most valuable to them—the thanks of a suffering, a relieved, and a grateful class of people. He would now put the questions of which he had given notice:—" 1. Whether the Government have received any information respecting the discontinuance of the works under the Drainage Act in the county of Cavan, and the dismissal, by order of the Board of Works, of the labourers employed in them; and whether such discontinuance of the drainage works is permanent, or merely temporary? 2. Whether the Board of Works have furnished the Government with their reasons for taking such a step? 3. Whether such order of the Board of Works was applicable to all parts of Ireland where similar works were in progress, or only enforced in particular localities; and, in the latter case, by what rules and principles the Board of Works were regulated, in making the selection?"

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE regretted that the answer he was about to give might not be altogether satisfactory to the noble Lord. This subject was undoubtedly one which must deeply interest their Lordships and the public, both from the nature of the works, which were of an eminently useful and reproductive character, and from the testimony which the noble Lord had so strongly borne to the character of the workmen employed upon them. It was with great regret that he (the Marquess of Lansdowne) had heard that these works were abandoned; but he begged to explain that that was no act of the Government. Those works did not come within the description of works authorised by the Land Improvement Act; but the Board of Works were authorised to carry them on so far as loans could be obtained for the purpose. The works were carried on partly by means of loans provided by individuals who were interested in the property to be benefited, or by persons who advanced money on speculation; partly by loans which were furnished by the Board of Works from the public funds to a certain extent, but not to an indefinite amount. He deeply regretted the exhaustion of the funds at this particular time; but it was not in the power of the Board of Works to apply any additional sums to the continuance of those works.

IRISH POOR LAW.

Lord MONTEAGLE rose to move the Resolutions of which he had given notice:—

"That the Circular Letters of the Irish Poor Law Commissioners, dated the 23rd May, 1848, direct a Change in Practice at variance with the direct Provisions of the 1st and 2nd Vict., cap. 56, sect. 53, 54, and the 10th Vict., cap. 31, sect. 8, 10.

"That such a Change in the Administration of the Law, if shown to be necessary and expedient, can only be carried into effect by the Authority of the Legislature.

"That any Orders issued, or Authority claimed or exercised, by an Administrative Department, to alter or set aside the Law of the Land, is of Dangerous Precedent, and demands the immediate Attention of the House, more especially when such

Orders are issued during the Session, when the Sense of Parliament might have been taken upon the Question."

This was a subject which affected England as much as it did Ireland; and he would explain to their Lordships in a very few words the case he was about to submit to them. The question which he was desired to raise was, whether the Poor Law Commissioners had or had not exceeded their authority. In every poor-law the principle had been recognised that relief given to a wife was relief given to the husband; and that relief given to a child under fifteen years of age was relief given to the father. When the last Irish Poor Law Bill was in the other House, a clause was inserted which had the effect of prohibiting the extension of relief to any person in possession of more than a quarter of an acre of land. The Bill did not palpably differ from the law of England, with this exception, that the practice under the law in Ireland was more in favour of the pauper than it was in the former country. Taking, then, the two provisions of the Irish Poor Law to which he had referred together, it was evident that the giving relief to the wife or child of a person who held more than a quarter of an acre of land was prohibited. Now, the order issued by the Irish Poor Law Commissioners, in the circular dated the 23rd of May, entirely set aside this provision of the law, as completely as if it had been repealed by Act of Parliament; because it said that cases of very great privation had arisen, "in consequence of the head of the family refusing to give up the occupation of any part of the land he held" (the occupation being more than a quarter of an acre); and proceeded to direct that such members of the family of a person holding more than a quarter of an acre of land as might be destitute, might legally be relieved in the workhouse of the union; or if the workhouse were full, the guardians might relieve them out of the workhouse, if an order of the Poor Law Commissioners authorising the relief of such persons out of the workhouse, under the second section of the Act, when in operation in the union in which they resided. The effect of the circular would be to encourage persons not to give up the possession of their land; and the person refusing to do so would have a direct advantage over him who gave up possession, because he would receive relief for his family under the circular, which would be claimed by the other under the law. This assumption of authority by the Poor Law Commissioners should be terminated. It was time that some understanding should be come to as to the principle to be observed; and if that laid down by the Commissioners were right let it be declared to be law by Parliament; for if the Commissioners were allowed to set aside the law, there would cease to be any co-operation on the part of the people of Ireland in maintaining it. In reference to the relief works, it would be recollected that complaints were made that parties in possession of land were permitted to take advantage of them, and it was said that they were got upon the relief works by the interest of persons wishing to be the better able thereby to obtain their rent from those parties. This was put a stop to, and direct authority was given to the Government officers to strike off from the public works the holders of land. How then could be reconciled with that course of proceedings the circular of the Irish Poor Law Commissioners, which set forth that parties receiving relief might continue in possession of their land? In the case drawn up by the Commissioners for the opinion of the Attorney General, the circumstance of a woman who perished from want was mentioned. The law, however, was not responsible for that. It was stated in the case, that—"inquiry has been made by the inspector of the union in which the woman died, in order to ascertain the truth of this statement; and he has confirmed it, and stated at the same time that the woman's husband and her children are not likely long to survive her, as the man will not give up the land he holds." The defect was not in the law, for relief was open to these parties, but it was the unnatural husband and parent that was to blame, as he refused to do that which the law required him to do in order to get relief. With regard to the second circular of the Poor Law Commissioners, dated June 8, he observed that that claimed afresh the same unlimited power of setting aside the law; and if this enlarged system of relief were acquiesced in, the fund for the relief of the really destitute would be exhausted in a period comparatively short. He could not believe that these circulars had been issued with the knowledge of the official members of the Irish Poor Law Commission. His right hon. Friend the Secretary for Ireland could hardly have been cognisant of the first circular, or of the awkward and inefficient way in which it was attempted to be explained by the second circular. The circular of the 23rd of May, if permitted to be acted on, would give rise to the direst consequences, inasmuch as it would hold out to those who disregarded the law not only impunity from punishment, but an actual premium for persevering in that disobedience. The noble Lord concluded by moving the resolutions.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE was not at all surprised that this subject had attracted the attention of the noble Lord. Agreeing as he did in most that had fallen from the noble Lord, and in the importance of preventing any mischief arising from misapprehension on this subject, he hoped he should be able to satify the noble Lord that it would be perfectly consistent with his duty and with the interests of Ireland to withdraw or suspend any Motion on the subject. Undoubtedly he (the Marquess of Lansdowne) could not concur in the proposed Motion, if upon no other ground, still upon this, namely, because it took on itself to pronounce the law, not in the form of an Act of Parliament, but by the resolutions of one House, and thus lead them into the very error into which the Commissioners had fallen. The only explanation he could offer of the circular in question was, that it was hastily drawn up to meet a particular object, and that it emanated in a moment of haste from a desire to prevent the destruction of life from starvation, which had, indeed, taken place in one particular instance. If the principle of the circular were adopted as a general rule, it would, no doubt, subvert the principle of the law, and of the policy on which it was founded. The intention of the Legislature was that the law of Ireland should not exceed the law of England in its provisions for maintaining the poor. He was sure the House would agree with him when he said that those who held possession of land ought to be compelled to provide for the maintenance of their families. That was the law of England, and he did not hesitate to say that it ought to be the law of Ireland also. So fully was he convinced of the necessity and justice of acting upon that principle, that it afforded him great satisfaction to be able to inform the House that the Poor Law Commissioners of Ireland intended as soon as possible to make an order to the effect that no assistance should be given by the head of a family whenever he is in possession of land. It was the duty of the Commissioners to see that relief was duly administered; and he doubted not their Lordships would approve of the regulations by which it was proposed that that object should be carried into effect. Owing to the eagerness with which land was sought for in Ireland—the almost ungovernable desire which influenced the peasantry of that country to obtain upon any terms the possession of land, it frequently happened that small patches got into the hands of parties who were in the utmost extremity of distress, and those wretchedly poor individuals held it without being able to make the least contribution towards the maintenance of their families. Now, he did not hesitate to say, that men who placed themselves in such a position ought to be punished. There could be no greater state of misery than that which permitted the continuance of such a system, and the Legislature was bound to take care that those who possessed property, who held land, and neglected to provide for their families, should be punished, for surely the possession of land afforded *primâ facie* evidence that they were not altogether without the means of making provision for those who stood towards them in the nearest degree of relationship: so long as such people had anything to be reached, their immediate families ought not to become burdensome to the ratepayers. He quite agreed with his noble Friend that of all abuses connected with the administration of the poor-laws none could be greater than that the wives and children of men who held land should go to a public charity for relief; he therefore thought that no time should be lost in issuing an order that assistance should not in future be given to such persons, or those naturally dependent on them. No doubt there must be exceptions made in particular cases; and most certainly the grounds of such exceptions ought to be recorded and submitted to the Poor Law Commissioners. Those were the views which he entertained on the subject: he believed he might say that his Colleagues in office entertained similar opinions; and he trusted that what he had said would be sufficient to induce his noble Friend to suspend his Motion, at least for the present.

LORD BROUGHAM said, that though he had expressed some surprise at the circulars now on the table of their Lordships' House, yet he was by no means prepared to say that he differed from the opinions expressed by the Attorney and Solicitor General for Ireland, and the inclination of his mind certainly was that the law fully bore them out; but of this no rational being could entertain a doubt that, whether by a new Act of Parliament, or by a new order, something must be done to put an end to a gross and flagrant abuse, which threatened the structure of society—at least of economical society. It was intolerable that a man, say with 500*l.* a year, should refuse to maintain his family, because, if a man with any means whatever, were able to refuse, then upon principle a man of the largest property must be entitled to do likewise. As to the construction of the law which had been brought under their notice, he must be permitted to say he did not think it expedient that their Lordships should pronounce any opinion whatever; and for that reason he thought that they would scarcely affirm the first resolution proposed by his noble Friend. Still he was glad that the attention of the House had been called to the subject; and it was most satisfactory to receive an assurance from his noble Friend the President of the Council that the Queen's Government felt the necessity of making a change—at least of making some attempt to abate such an evil. Nevertheless, he saw great difficulty in framing such an order as would fully meet the case; and he feared that Ministers must come to Parliament for a fresh enactment, in which he feared also that there must be a great many exceptions.

The DUKE of RICHMOND thought it would be well if the Government were to obtain a more deliberate opinion than any that had yet been received from the law officers of the Crown on the construction of the Act of Parliament. If the Irish Attorney and Solicitor General were right in their view of the law, then he would advise the Government to bring in a Bill enacting, that should the wives or children of any holder of land accept relief, the title to the land should thereby be forfeited. If he were an Irish magistrate, he should punish the holders of such land with the utmost severity.

LORD REDESDALE said, that they were bound to give relief to all starving persons; but he doubted that the mere possession of land rendered a man liable to be committed, supposing his wife and family to claim relief.

LORD CAMPBELL said, it was quite true that a man's refusing to maintain his wife and family formed no reason why those poor people should be allowed to die; provision must be made for them. But he thought the circular incautiously worded, for it seemed to lead to the supposition that the wives and children of such persons were to be indiscriminately relieved. He always thought that the Quarter-Acre Clause was a salutary enactment; and he had generally disapproved of anything calculated to interfere with its operation. As to the Motion of his noble Friend, it had at least produced a satisfactory discussion; and, that end having been answered, he trusted that his proposition might, for the present, be advantageously suspended.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS considered that if an order were framed to meet the case, such an arrangement would supersede any modification of the law. It was clear that a man who was in possession of land, and left his wife and family chargeable to the union, refusing to give up the land, ought to be made punishable.

LORD BEAUMONT said, it appeared that without an Act of Parliament it was impossible to get out of the difficulty which existed under either the original or the present interpretation of the law. Supposing a person in possession of land to be so poor notwithstanding as to be unable to support his wife and family, the refusal of that man to give up the land appeared to him (Lord Beaumont) as equivalent to refusing to support his wife and family, and he should be punished in the same manner as a man in England who refused to work to support his wife. If this could not be done in Ireland, the law required immediate alteration; if the fault was in the law, the law should be amended. But great caution should be used, since, whatever course was pursued, the law would be liable to much abuse. He believed the noble Marquess was in possession of a paper which, when laid before their Lordships, would show that there were many persons in the receipt of workhouse relief who were known to have money in savings-banks, invested in various sums, and in other people's names; in some cases the sum amounted to 200*l.* Yet a person really in possession of so large a sum of money was treated as one of the destitute poor. The law, must, therefore, be made as stringent as possible.

LORD STANLEY said, their Lordships were indebted to the noble Lord for bringing forward this important subject; but there was one consideration which induced him to suggest to the noble Lord not to persevere in pressing his resolution.

Throughout his statement and his resolutions the noble Lord had assumed that the Poor Law Commissioners, by the circular they had issued, had taken upon themselves to "set aside" and violate the law; whereas the defence of the Poor Law Commissioners was—and he thought it was a valid defence—that they had acted according to the best interpretation which the legal advisers of the Crown could put upon the law as it stood. The assumption in the resolution that the Poor Law Commissioners had "set aside" the law, was not, therefore, warranted by the fact. With respect to the question itself, he did not feel himself competent to form a judgment as to the legality of the proceeding of the Commissioners; but he must say that he never saw an opinion in so direct contradiction not only to what was considered to be the law, but to the avowed intention of both Houses of Parliament, or that of the Attorney General for Ireland. He did not see how the judgment and the intention of Parliament could have been more clearly and more explicitly expressed than they had been in reference to this subject. When the Act of the 10th Victoria was under discussion in this House, it had been suggested (and he had said it would be so) that men possessing nine or ten acres of land would seek pauper relief. This was not credited by many of their Lordships, whereas it had turned out that in defiance of the intentions of the law, which was intended to check that spirit of lavish expenditure apparently inherent in Irish functionaries, and that desperate clinging to land, whether the occupation were beneficial or not, which was so inherent in the Irish peasantry, they found that boards of guardians had in many cases been relieving the families of men who held several acres of land. In fact, provisions which were almost deemed supererogatory had been not only neglected, but absolutely violated and set aside. He did not mean to say that it was imperative upon poor-law guardians not to afford relief to the wives and children of persons in possession of land. In England relief might be granted to the families of those not absolutely destitute, but with this proviso, that in such cases the person receiving relief for his family, and yet not destitute, would be liable to penal consequences if he did not reimburse the outlay thus incurred. On the other hand, however, he viewed with the greatest apprehension and alarm the opinion given by Mr. Henn, and sanctioned by the Irish Attorney General—an opinion which went the length of alleging that the mere possession of twelve acres of land did not place a person in the position of being penally liable if his family were relieved from the rate. He (Lord Stanley) would have concluded that the person relieved was liable from the mere fact of his possession of the land. The opinion went on to state, that "if the father, notwithstanding his possession of the land, is really unable to maintain the children, I do not think he could be properly convicted under the 10th and 11th of Victoria, cap. 84, section 2." If that opinion were correct, the possession of land was no test as to the propriety of giving relief at all. Yet Parliament intended it to be a final and conclusive test. The intention of the Legislature was, that the possession of land should exclude the plea of destitution. The opinion of Mr. Henn, backed by that of Mr. Monahan, was, that the possession of land did not exclude the plea of destitution. Those Gentlemen, however, recommended that every case should be decided on its own merits before boards of guardians. Why, this was opening the door as wide as if they had never passed an Act to shut it at all. The opinion to which he had alluded set aside what were the clearly expressed intentions of Parliament; and he concurred with the noble Lord who had spoken last in saying, that if the state of the law really were as Mr. Henn and Mr. Monahan had explained it to be, that it was a most unsatisfactory state, opposed to the avowed intentions of Parliament, and that it was imperative upon the Government to introduce some specific measure to put an end to a state of things so inconsistent with what was the purpose of the Legislature. The present was a law which would let in upon Ireland a flood of landholding paupers—of paupers holding, but not beneficially occupying land; it would, in fact, tend to the pauperisation of the whole country. It would render the poor-law incapable of being carried out; it would involve landlords, tenants, and paupers in one common ruin—would plunge the country into one common gulf of destitution, misery, and death, from which even the resources of this mighty empire would be unable to rescue it.

LORD MONTEAGLE replied: He considered that there was no excuse for the circular letter which had been issued; it was, to say the least, imprudent and injudicious. He trusted that he was not without some justification for the course which he had adopted, and that he had made out a case to the House. He would feel it his duty, after the statements which had been made, to withdraw the Motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, June 19, 1848.

MINUTES.] NEW MEMBER SWORN. For Chester County (Northern Division), George Cornwall Legh, Esq.

PUBLIC BILLS. *Reported.*—Imprisonment for Debt (Ireland).

3° and passed;—Public Health; Appeals on Civil Bills (Dublin).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Ord, from Dissenters of Hanover Square Chapel, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, for an Alteration of the Form of Oaths taken by Members of Parliament.—By Mr. Henry Berkeley, and Dr. Bowring, from an Immense Number of Places, for an Extension of the Elective Franchise.—By Mr. Bouverie, and other Hon. Members, from several Places, for Better Observance of the Lord's Day.—By Mr. Ellice, from Straithkinness, and its Neighbourhood, Fifeshire, in favour of the Places of Worship Sites (Scotland) Bill.—By Mr. Hume, from Inhabitants of the Island of Jamaica, to take the Case of the West India Colonies into Consideration.—By Mr. Cardwell, from Liverpool, against any Alteration of the Sugar Duties.—By Sir John Pakington, from Members of the Mauritius Association in London, for Carrying out the Recommendations of the Committee appointed to Inquire into the Sugar Duties.—By Mr. Loch, from the Town Council of the Royal Burgh of Kirkwall, for Inquiry respecting the Crown Lands (Orkney).—By Viscount Adare, from the Parish of Glyncorrwg, Glamorganshire, against the Diplomatic Relations, Court of Rome, Bill.—By Mr. G. S. Duff, from Members of the Parochial Board of Elgin, for Alteration of, and by Mr. Duncan, from Dundee, against, the Lunatic Asylums (Scotland) Bill.—By Sir George Grey, from Members of Royal College of Surgeons of England, in favour of Reform in the Medical Profession.—By Mr. Trelawny, from Guardians of the Poor of the Tavistock Union, for an Alteration of the Law respecting Mendicancy.—By Captain Berkeley, from Masters, Mates, and Seamen employed in the Merchant Service, in the Port of London, respecting the Merchants' Fund as Affecting Seamen Shipwrecked in the Colonies.

THE COLONIAL OFFICE AND THE WEST INDIA COMMITTEE.

MR. HAWES had to make a very short statement to the House in consequence of some observations which had fallen the other night from the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, the drift of which was to accuse the noble Lord the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department of withholding a certain despatch from the Governor of one of the sugar colonies. He (Mr. Hawes) was examined before the West India Committee, he thought, on the 5th of May, and he then referred to a despatch from the Governor of Jamaica, which he informed the Committee would be furnished. The noble Lord had said that this despatch had been purposely withheld. He had, therefore, thought it right to bring down the original despatch in his hand, with the minutes upon it and the dates, to which he should refer—and which would show, conclusively, that his noble Friend's intention was that the despatch should be immediately communicated to the Committee. The despatch arrived on the 27th of March. On the 27th of March he could state that it reached his hands, with a minute which was to the effect that—

> "This is a copy of the despatch for which the Committee on West India distress have asked. We had a copy of the document which was required in the Votes of the House of Assembly. It was to be sent to the Committee to-day. Would it not be better to send instead a copy of this despatch, which is important, with the report and evidence which we have got now for the first time? There are two copies. And so it is desirable to send it to-day."

That reached his hands from the Secretary of State with the words—"I agree with you that this despatch ought to be given at the same time with the report and evidence to which it refers." He added, "I agree;" and on the 30th of March his noble Friend made a minute to this effect —"this may be laid before the Committee as suggested." As the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn stated that the despatch had not been laid before the Committee, he had thought it necessary to make inquiry on the subject, to show that it was the intention of his noble Friend (Earl Grey) and himself that it should be communicated. He was told, on the 28th of March, that the enclosure of the despatch containing the report of the evidence taken by the Legislature of Jamaica, had been sent to the Committee. The despatch required some attention, to have his noble Friend's intentions carried into effect. When it was returned to the department, they omitted to act upon his instructions. It must be said in their defence that the mass of papers and pressure of business offered some apology for that omission; but what he was most anxious to state was, that here was a most decided intention manifested on the part of his noble Friend (Earl Grey) and himself to have that despatch communicated to the Committee. He thought that the House would be satisfied that he had set that point at rest. Allusion had been made, also, to papers moved for, before the House had adjourned. Those papers were not ready when the House adjourned; but he had laid them on the table on the day when the House met again. He could not have done so earlier. In his evidence before the West India Committee, it was stated that certain despatches had arrived on the 3rd of January; but he had referred particularly to a despatch received on the 1st of February with respect to African emigration. He had apprehended that some delay had occurred; but on referring to the Votes he found that the papers in question were laid on the table on the 3rd of February, after the meeting of the House, and ordered to be printed on the 4th. He hoped he had succeeded in showing that there was no disposition to withhold any information of importance from the House.

SUGAR DUTIES.

On the Motion that the Speaker do leave the chair,

Mr. ELLICE rose to call attention to the painful interest which the melancholy and unfortunate position of West Indian affairs had created in this country and in the colony. That must be his apology for interposing between the Motion of his noble Friend and the Speaker leaving the chair, in order that he might obtain from Her Majesty's Government some explanation of the views of policy they entertained with respect to the future management of those colonies. When the noble Lord the Member for Lynn originally gave notice of his Motion for a Committee of Inquiry into the state of West India Affairs, he then deprecated the delay that must take place between the colonists knowing what would be their fate—

Sir JOHN PAKINGTON rose to appeal to the right hon. Gentleman whether he would proceed with his statement, when he (Sir J. Pakington) had a regular notice on the Paper. He was not aware, when the right hon. Gentleman rose, that he was going to make a speech on the subject, and he now asked him to allow him (Sir J. Pakington) to move his Amendment.

Mr. ELLICE begged to state, in reply, that his particular object in rising was to prevent the hon. Gentleman from moving his Amendment. It was of essential importance, before they were called upon to vote either for the Motion of his noble Friend, or for the Amendment of the hon. Baronet, that the House should have some explanation of the intentions of Her Majesty's Government as to the future state of the West Indies. The question already had been too much narrowed. He was not going into the consideration of the question of protection or the amount of protection, but grave and more serious considerations must be brought under notice before the question could be disposed of. He had in the first instance objected to the appointment of the Committee on the condition of the West Indies, proposed by the noble Lord opposite (Lord G. Bentinck), fearing that it would occasion great delay in the consideration of the subject by the House itself; but after what had occurred, he could not refrain from expressing his thanks to the noble Lord for the judgment and talent he had manifested in the course of the inquiry, and for the untiring patience of the noble Lord and other Members serving on that Committee. If the information could have been obtained from no other source, the report and the evidence taken before the Committee would have been amply sufficient to expose the condition of the colonies in the West Indies to this country. Before they passed to the Resolution or to the Amendment, he wished the House to look to the state of things before them. Since the Emancipation Act had passed, and compensation had been granted under it, and which had been considered in that House by many Members as a munificent boon to the colonies, they should look to the great want of provision that there had been in the shape of other measures which should have accompanied the great change in society effected by the emancipation, and without which measures the compensation given would prove inadequate for the losses which the colonists would sustain. Compensation was justly due to the colonies for the large sacrifices which they would be exposed to by these measures, the merits of which no one could doubt. But then they must look to the degree in which the interests of individuals were guarded, in dealing with the principle of giving adequate compensation for the losses with which they were threatened. They must also look to the course of events which immediately succeeded to the Emancipation Act. Every practical suggestion which had been then most strongly urged—every course which had been most relied upon to follow out that great measure and give it success—had been unattended to, and the colonies were denied all those further plans which were to carry the change into effect. He denied that the colonies were under the necessity of considering that compensation as full, for they were in a much worse situation than they had reason to expect, and they had been exposed to the risk, not only of danger, but of utter ruin. Look to the transactions which occurred immediately after the Emancipation Act. Large sums of money were sent to the Mauritius, and every encouragement was given to the immigration into that place of labourers from India. The population had thus been doubled by means which were withheld from the West Indies. The amount of the produce in that colony had been doubled, much to the disadvantage of the West Indies, and, as it ultimately proved, much to the injury of the Mauritius itself, in consequence of the difficulties it had to contend with as regarded the supply of capital. Then, in 1844 and 1845, the right hon. Baronet opposite (Sir Robert Peel) adopted the system of admission for free-grown foreign sugar. In alluding to this subject he wished at once to state, that he did not condemn the course taken by the Government of the right hon. Baronet, or of that pursued by his noble Friend and his Colleagues. The circumstances which occurred in 1844 and 1845, by the extent and increase of credit which then existed, brought to this country such supplies of foreign sugar, that there was an enormous competition with that which came from the West Indian colonies. Then followed the Bill of 1846. He begged it to be understood that he did not complain of slave-grown sugar being admitted to competition in the markets of this country. The Act of 1844 admitted free-grown foreign sugar, and the result which followed in 1846 was a necessary result, against which no Government could contend. It was obviously clear that the deficiency in other countries which would arise from foreign free sugar being brought from thence to supply our markets, must be filled up with foreign slave sugar, and therefore the operation of the former law was as effective in giving an impulse to slave sugar as if it were admitted directly. In addition to this, the House must recollect that considerable difficulties arose as to the operation of the law of 1844 with regard to treaties with some foreign countries. The most difficult and nice questions of diplomacy arose, and above all with respect to America, the slave-grown sugar from which country we were ultimately obliged to admit on the same footing as foreign free sugar. The change, therefore, became inevitable. All these measures, however, increased the difficulties of the colonies, for there could be no doubt as to the distressed and ruinous condition in which they were placed. It had appeared before the Committee that, however much Gentlemen might differ as to the propositions which should be adopted, there was no difference of opinion as to the extent of distress and ruin in these colonies, and that it prevailed to such a degree as to be unparalleled in any other country in the world. And what were the remedial propositions of his noble Friend? As to the proposed alteration in the duty on sugar, it was an ingenious but small device to escape being placed on the horns of a dilemma, that was in either doing nothing, or in making a slight alteration in the Act of 1846. He did not ask for protection, but the question was, whether they might not at once lower the duty on English plantation sugar to 10*s.* a cwt. If this could be done, on the same charge as the amount which his noble Friend proposed to give for the purpose of obtaining a supply of labour from the coast of Africa—and which he believed was the most impolitic purpose to which the public funds could be applied—he trusted it would be done. His noble Friend might say he only intended to lend the money to the colonies, but the House and the country knew perfectly well what such loans were, and what chance there was of their being ever repaid. His noble Friend never could lend 500,000*l.* for a more useless or impracticable purpose. Then, with reference to the further intentions of his noble Friend with regard to colonies. Supposing his noble Friend succeeded in carrying his resolutions, and his plan should receive the sanction of Parliament, did he consider in what spirit it would be received in the colonies, which all recent accounts described to be in the greatest state of dissatisfaction? The question involved was not merely one of protection. The question was as to whether they should receive some hope of the adoption of propositions calculated to benefit their future condition, or whether they should at once subject them to despair by merely adopting the measures proposed, and by which also they would ensure resistance to the authority of the Government, and the British Legislature would find to its cost that the colonial legislature would not vote subsidies for the support of the Government establishments. He would then ask whether such a small reduction of duties as he had suggested in West Indian produce would not be a most politic measure. This struck him as the best course to follow. He had however chiefly risen to ask, after the feelings manifested in the West Indies under their present distress, and the urgent prayers they had made for relief, if the answer was to be, that all they had to expect was the two measures of the noble Lord? How would such a reply now be received in the West Indies? Did they expect, after what had passed, that the local governments in the West Indian colonies, or in Trinidad, or in Guiana, would be maintained by the legislatures there according to the scale proposed by Her Majesty's Colonial Department, when they received the news of the ruin into which the adoption of the proposed measures would plunge them? What he asked was, whether under such circumstances the Government was prepared to show if it was intended to propose some further measures for the relief of these colonies? His hon. Friend the Under Secretary of the Colonies had made, as far as he could perceive, an unnecessary defence of his noble Friend the Secretary for the Colonies, in the charge of his having intended to withhold information from the Committee. There was, however, another point to which he wished to advert. A question was put the other night by the hon. Member for Inverness (Mr. Baillie) as to whether the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hawes) would not produce some despatches which had been received from the Governor of Demerara? His hon. Friend said he could not then, but they must wait until the answers of the noble Earl the Secretary for the Colonies could also be furnished. This was not a proper answer; and certainly the Government got nothing by it; for all the information which was asked for was already in the hands of all connected with the West Indies. In the colony of Demerara, the Court of Policy of the place, and which had charge of the expenditure of the funds of the colony, applied to his noble Friend at the head of the Colonial Office for a reduction of 25 per cent in the salaries of all public officers in that colony. They stated that the reduction of their means had been such as to deprive them of the power of paying the taxes necessary to defray the charge of the large colonial establishment there. He understood his noble Friend (Earl Grey) had refused to listen to this request, and the consequence was, that the Legislature of the colony refused all supplies. This would be the case in all our West Indian Colonies. What was the case of Jamaica? From what source did the supplies come, which enabled the taxes to be paid in that colony? Out of the pockets of the merchants, who had to pay the most extravagant wages to obtain a supply of sugar, which was sold at such a price here as would not remunerate them. This state of things could not continue. He had before him the financial accounts of Jamaica, from which it appeared the whole of the civil colonial expenditure of that colony was 300,000*l.*; the charge for collection of this amount was 33,000*l.*; the charge for the civil establishments was 55,000*l.*; the charge for the judicial establishments was 23,000*l.*; and that for the ecclesiastical establishment was 13,000*l.* Did his noble Friend believe these charges would continue to be paid? If he did not, would he tell the House how he meant that the government of the colony should be carried on? Did he mean to allow things to continue in such a state that the great expectations to be derived from emancipation must fail? The poor people who were the peculiar object of that great measure still required constant attention and care, and it was necessary that a large number of stipendiary magistrates should be maintained, for these people had to go before them constantly and on apparently the most trifling affairs, and if this useful body was not kept up the great experiment of the emancipation of the colonial people would entirely fail. Such were the questions which he wished to put to his noble Friend before they proceeded further. The reason he took advantage of the Motion of his noble Friend, that the Speaker should leave the chair, was that they might obtain some further information to guide the House as to the future prospects of these colonies. He objected to the grant of 500,000*l.*, even supposing the West Indians would take it; but he did not believe they would; but if they did, he believed the adoption of the plan would be the most impolitic course which could be proposed for the benefit of the colonies. What was the state of the West Indies now? A great majority of the planters had been placed under the most unfortunate circumstances, and they had abandoned altogether the cultivation of their property. On three estates cultivation had totally ceased, and the same state of things would follow on a great many more plantations, if proper steps were not taken to avert the threatened evil. If they dealt with foresight and prudence, they might preserve these properties still under cultivation, by proper arrangements for adjusting the demand

and supply of labour. If all imperial legislation was to be confined to these measures, the result would be that after having excited expectations, they had only proposed that which would lead to despair. He repeated, if they even now acted with prudence and wisdom, those of the colonists who still cultivated their property might not be involved in the common ruin which had fallen upon the other owners of property in the colonies. He did not disguise the circumstance that his hopes did not go beyond this; for the great proportion of the properties in the West Indian colonies had been irretrievably ruined. He had listened with great attention to the speech of his noble Friend; and there was one passage in it which he had heard with great pain, namely, that part of it in which his noble Friend adverted to the extravagance of the West Indian planters. He was sorry that his noble Friend should have been influenced and been led away by such an opinion, coming as it evidently did from the Colonial Office; a department of the Government which always affected to understand the interests of the colonies better than the colonists could do themselves. For the last ten or twelve years he had ceased to have any interest in the colonies. The property which he had held in those colonies he had let to persons who were formerly his agents, and he now received from them an amount of rent equivalent to the salaries which he formerly paid them as his agents. He did so because he knew the advantage of giving the care of property in the West Indies to persons who resided on it; indeed without this it was almost impossible to cultivate it. But what was the case with those persons to whom he had alluded? Notwithstanding the comparatively miserable charge they had to pay, these persons were almost ruined; and after having expended all the savings they had made from their hard-gained earnings, were now amongst those who applied to the Government and the Legislature for such small aid as would save them from utter and irretrievable ruin. Such a reflection as had been made on the alleged extravagance of the West Indian planters, was, as regarded these poor people, an observation as unjust as it was ungenerous. He hoped he should hear no more of such reflections. As far as he had read the evidence given before the Committee of the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck), it appeared to him that there was not the slightest ground for such a charge; on the contrary, it was shown the greatest pains was taken in economising labour, and every means was resorted to to get an increased amount of produce; but still, notwithstanding the adoption of all improvements, the greatest difficulties were experienced in keeping estates in cultivation, in consequence of the price of the produce being insufficient. The evidence also showed that the planters had been obliged to part with their improved machines and engines to persons in the Havana, that being the only chance of getting any return for them. There was another circumstance to which he wished to call the attention of his noble Friend. Allusions had often been made to the white population in our colonies, and in the Spanish colonies in the West Indies. When allusion was thus made to Cuba and our colonies, hon. Gentlemen were apt to forget the different circumstances of the two cases. It might make comparatively little difference between a man living in Spain or in Cuba. The Spaniard lived under a burning sun in one place as well as the other; but the circumstance of an Englishman going to a tropical country was different; and the only inducement which could lead him to a West Indian colony was the hope of getting a return for his capital and for the exercise of his industry. They had also been told that the number of the white population was reduced to a miserable proportion of the whole inhabitants of our colonies, and did not amount to above seven or eight per cent as compared with the coloured population. When even those who remained saw the ruin of the capitalists engaged in the production of sugar in those colonies, it would drive more and more of them away. He would then ask his noble Friend, whether it was wise, by measures of this description, to throw despair into the minds of the whole white population of the colonies, if he wished to maintain the social condition of the people there? These were some of the important considerations which had induced him to interfere. He did not say that he should not vote for the Resolutions, nor did he say that he should vote for the Amendment of the hon. Baronet; all he wished was to ask his noble Friend whether he intended to shut out all hope from the colonists? If he heard no declaration from his noble Friend that it was the intention of the Government to propose other and more extensive measures for the relief of the colonies, he could not support his noble Friend; for he believed by pursuing such a course he should be acting in a way calculated to destroy the best interests of humanity and civilisation in the colonies. He was satisfied, if something much more extensive was not done with respect to our colonies, but a short time would elapse between the passing of these measures and their ultimate destruction. Another subject of great importance was under the consideration of the House, with respect to which he intended to give his support to his noble Friend—he meant the repeal of the navigation laws. Was, however, his noble Friend aware of the effect of this measure on the West Indies, should the cultivation of sugar be abandoned in our colonies? There would then be no temptation to our merchants to send vessels to those colonies, and the trade would get into what was called its natural channel—that was, a direct intercourse between our West Indian possessions and the United States. He did not say that this should prevent them carrying out a great principle of sound policy; but the House should still be aware that the little trade which would be left in the West Indies would be carried on between the coloured people in the colonies directly with the inhabitants of the United States. There was another point connected with the subject which required consideration. Did the noble Lord believe that the present charge for Governors could be maintained in the West India colonies? Some other plan for their maintenance must be devised than getting large salaries for them from the Colonial Assemblies. They would no longer be able to keep Lord Harris in Trinidad, or Sir C. Grey in Jamaica, unless they paid them by the votes of the House, than they could expect to restore prosperity to the colonies by those measures of his noble Friend. No one could read the admirable despatches of Lord Harris and the other Governors in the West Indies, without admitting that it would be most difficult to spare such efficient public servants. They must adopt a much wider course than had hitherto been pursued in the future government of these colonies, and they must avoid that system of petty interference in all details in the colonies on the part of the Colonial Office, which system, however, had not characterised merely the Government of his noble Friend, but of the various Governments which had preceded it for many years. It was impossible for his noble Friend at the head of the Colonial Department, or any other man, to give satisfaction as long as the present system at the Colonial Office was continued, by which they never allowed the people to do anything for themselves in the colonies. His noble Friend proposed that a grant for immigration of 500,000*l*. should be made to the colonies; and at the same time he said that his noble Friend the Secretary of the Colonies had not yet had time to consider the regulations or rules which were to govern the introduction of these blacks from Africa into the colonies. How long then would the plan be delayed? The colonists would be driven to despair by the answer which the Legislature would give to them if they only passed this measure; and the result would be to diminish, if not to destroy, all the influence of this country with them. They would naturally ask whether they were to have no greater control over their own affairs than they had hitherto been allowed to exercise? They would say, "If you cannot redress our grievances, why will you not allow us to redress them ourselves?" Why would they not, for instance, allow them to elect, as Governor, a man whom he had known during a great part of his life—whose wisdom, experience, and sagacity, were undoubted—he alluded to a near relative of the hon. Member for Montrose in Trinidad? It was not possible that with this last *coup de grace* the old system of government could be maintained. He wanted, then, to know what the views of the Government here were upon this subject, before he came to deal with what he thought was but a miserable and petty consideration, namely, what the exact duty on a pound of sugar ought to be. If they were prepared to vote money for the reduction of these establishments, they could give them less protection for their sugar. If, on the other hand, they were not prepared to do one thing or the other, then they ought to intrust to the colonies themselves the election of their own Governors—the conduct of their own affairs upon such principles as were best calculated to retrieve their sad condition. He entirely agreed with his noble Friend that the days for protection were altogether gone by, There was one other reason against temporising upon this subject. They were now living in times of great changes in respect to other countries. They had arrived at a moment when it appeared they were to have low prices and high taxes—when there was no chance of escape; for they could not get back to the times of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, in 1844, or to the times of Lord Goderich, in 1824. They had now made up their minds to the system of credit under which no value, or an exaggerated value, was given to commodities. They must now be content with the low prices to which everything was likely to fall, and, as well as they could, reconcile themselves to high taxes. This was a particular crisis in the affairs of this country, at which he should think that it would be both wise and consistent in the character of a reasonable Government to hold out a little assistance to the West India colonies, with a view of enabling them to tide over their present difficulties, and to arrive at a better state of things. He should think that they were called upon to take a comprehensive view of the condition of those colonies, and to have dealt with them in such a manner as would, if not restore them to their former prosperity, at all events prevent the failure of that great experiment they had made in the abolition of slavery—a measure to carry out which they had made great sacrifices, and had required great sacrifices to be made by others. He entreated the noble Lord, before he proceeded with the resolutions before the House, to explain whether the propositions he had already made were the only measures he had in contemplation for the relief of the difficulties in which the West Indies were involved, or for the government and expenses of those colonies, commensurate with the reduced circumstances under which they laboured.

Lord JOHN RUSSELL: It appears to me that the more regular course to have been taken would have been that the House should have gone into Committee, and there to have heard such explanations and defence of the resolutions to be proposed by the Government as we should have been prepared to offer. The hon. Baronet opposite, however, has not thought fit to allow that course to be taken; but has given notice of a resolution as an amendment on the Motion that the Speaker leave the chair. That being the course taken by the hon. Baronet, it seems to me that the only course the Government can pursue is, to hear the Motion of the hon. Gentleman, and then to enter upon a defence of the course of policy we propose to adopt. What the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Ellice) asks us to do is, to enter into a discussion and general explanation of our views now, before the hon. Baronet shall make his Motion. But that is a course which I am not prepared to adopt. I am the less inclined to adopt that course, because my right hon. Friend—while he declared at the commencement of his speech that he blamed no one—while he threw out objections to every course that has been proposed, and, I should say, to every course that can be proposed—does not seem, with all his sagacity, knowledge, and experience upon the subject, to have made up his mind as to the course which he feels ought to be pursued. My right hon. Friend seems to think that we should not propose the course of giving any more protection, and that we ought not to have pursued the course of advancing money to assist the immigration of labourers into the West Indies. Now, it does appear to me, not only from all we know ourselves, but from all the evidence and suggestions laid before us by others, that one of these courses, or both, are desirable—that either we ought to give them a longer term of protective duties, to enable the planters of the West Indies to make preparations for competition, or that we ought to give them greater facilities for the introduction of labourers, thereby reducing the rate of wages; that one or both of these courses was necessary to remedy the distress which I regret to think exists in these colonies. But my right hon. Friend says it would be better to give them 500,000*l.* in the shape of diminished duties on their produce. But supposing we were to guarantee this 500,000*l.*, and look upon it as wholly lost to this country, the interest of that sum at 4 per cent would be 20,000*l.*, and the reduction of duties that would give that amount would not be much more than what is proposed by the hon. Baronet; for no one supposes that the reduction of the present duty from 14*s.* to 10*s.* would produce a reduction of revenue of much less than 20,000*l.* I do not mean to follow my right hon. Friend into his various objections, because it would be, in fact, to enter into the whole debate which the hon. Baronet proposes to raise; but let me say, that with regard to the Motion of the hon. Baronet, he seems to me to have made a change in it, which, if his Motion be supported by the House, will place the West Indies, as well as Parliament, in a most embarrassing situation. As the Motion stood on Friday night, it was a very intelligible proposition—it was to give an increase of the protection, which is now 6*s.*, and to make it 10*s.*; and that was to be done by keeping foreign sugar at 20*s.* and reducing colonial sugar to 10*s.* I do not say, whether that was or was not a wise proposition. I have no doubt that the noble Lord the Member for Lynn would have defended it with great ability, and with all that extensive knowledge of the subject which his attention to the Committee must have given him; but at all events that proposition was intelligible. But the hon. Baronet now proposes that the proposition of the Government should be condemned by the House, and therefore leaves the present law to come into operation in July next. It does not follow that, supposing the proposition of the Government is condemned, the next day, or within the next twelve hours, any proposal for increased protection may not be condemned also; and therefore the present Act, which in July will change the duty of 20*s.* to 18*s.* 6*d.*, and thereby reduce the protection from 6*s.* to 4*s.* 6*d.*, will at once come into operation. In 1841, the present Lord Harrowby made a similar proposition, the object of which was very clear, and it was carried into effect; but the hon. Baronet will hardly gain his object by a mere resolution condemnatory of the present proposition. I, for my part, do not believe that the House would adopt the proposition which the hon. Baronet made on Friday night; and I suppose that he himself despaired of carrying it. He thought there was no hope whatever of raising the protection to 10*s.*, and therefore proposed his present Motion for the purpose of embarrassment and rendering the plan of the Government ineffective. I will only refer to an allusion made by my right hon. Friend to the speech I made on Friday night. He says that I commented on the extravagance of the colonial proprietors, and that I have taken my notions from the prevailing idea of the Colonial Office. He says I have founded the two or three words that I said with respect to extravagance solely on that idea. I beg to inform my right hon. Friend I have taken my notion from reading the evidence of a West India proprietor himself. That proprietor said that he himself went out to the West Indies and made a reduction of 1,000*l.* a year. That was no under-secretary, no clerk in the Colonial Office, but the gentleman himself possessing the property; and when he was asked how he reduced the 1,000*l.*, he said it was done by perquisites; and when asked what was the amount of those perquisites, he said—

> "I do not believe that the merchants in this country, intelligent as they are, unless they go out themselves, know much of what is going on in the West Indies. My own merchants told me that they believed my estates were economically conducted. When I went out, however, I found they were not so. The attorneys are the head agents of the estate: the merchants simply see the plantation accounts. In the plantation accounts there is always one very large item, namely, labourers' wages; and I will tell the Committee some of the charges which I found were included in that item. There is an estate groom, for instance; then there is attorney's cook and attorney's groom, attorney's servant, attorney's washer, attorney's maid, minding attorney's pigs, minding manager's pigs, picking grass for attorney; besides which, there are manager's servants and overseer's servants. As far as I and the merchant could see, all those came under the head of labourers' wages."

That is practical testimony—it is no prejudice of the Colonial Office, but practical testimony; and it certainly made an impression on my mind, and which I had on my mind when I spoke on Friday night, of the extravagance of some of the proprietors. And now I am to be told I am making an unfounded imputation, and maligning the characters of those gentlemen who are not guilty in any way of extravagance in managing their estates. I believe it is not the extravagance of those gentlemen themselves; I believe it is the consequence of that system of management; and I believe there are many instances of a similar character. But I do not wish to prevent the hon. Gentleman from making his proposition. He will have an opportunity of again stating his objections to our scheme, and we shall endeavour as far as we can to explain the views which we hold with regard to the West Indies. I do not, however, think my right hon. Friend has considered fully all the consequences that might follow from the suggestions he threw out of things that might possibly be done. I have always been very favourable to giving the colonists, as far as possible, the management of their own affairs; but when we speak of giving to the West Indians the management of their own affairs, we touch upon some very nice questions of practice, representation, and rights of voters, as difficult as those may be, which we shall have to consider to-morrow on the Motion of the hon. Member for Montrose, or still more difficult, and accompanied with more peril, when we have to consider them as applied to the West Indies. If you are to introduce a very low suffrage in Trinidad; if you allow every one of the imported negroes into Trinidad who may have been there a year, and is a male of full age, to have a vote, I think the representative chosen by those persons will not tend to assist Lord Harris in his government of Trinidad, and that it would introduce a very difficult problem in the government of the West Indian colonies. My right hon. Friend has not considered all the difficulties that would arise if we should at once introduce a system of representation in Trinidad without due deliberation. I am for increasing the power the people of the colonies have over their own affairs and government; but I am for increasing it with consideration and deliberation from time to time, and not at once for granting them an assembly chosen from the blacks for the government of these colonies.

SIR J. PAKINGTON rose to bring forward the Amendment of which he had so very reluctantly given notice; and he was rather strengthened than otherwise in his statements upon the subject by the speech he had just heard from the noble Lord. He felt how great was the task he had undertaken in casting himself, as a mere independent Member of the House of Commons, between the sugar-growing interest and the dangerous policy which Her Majesty's Government, he was sorry to find, were still disposed to persevere in—a policy which he was convinced would tend rapidly to the ruin and destruction of the colonists. He deeply felt how incompetent he was to undertake such an important task; but when he was applied to, as he had been, by those whose interests were involved, to bring the question before the House, he did not feel himself justified in allowing any private considerations to interfere to prevent him from giving them his assistance, how feeble soever that assistance might be. He was surprised, he should say, to hear from the noble Lord the charge that in moving the Amendment of which he had given notice, he was only seeking to produce embarrassment and delay. He assured the noble Lord he had no party motives whatsoever. He was actuated by no motives but the single-minded wish to rescue the colonies from the danger that hung over them; and he did not think that the shape in which he brought forward his resolution was open to the censure which the noble Lord had cast upon it. He had altered the shape of that resolution, because, holding the opinion that Her Majesty's Government deserved it, he wished the House to pass a direct censure upon their proposal. But he did not think that any such difficulty could arise out of it as the noble Lord had foretold. He found a Member of the Government in the Committee moving a resolution that the discretion should be in the hands of the Government, and whatever might be the fate of the resolution, he should beg to state that the Government would have no difficulty in coming to an arrangement of the question. He begged to state also that it was not his desire to argue the question as between the principle of protection on the one hand, or of free trade upon the other. He entertained no strong opinions as to protection on the one hand, nor should he, on the other, shrink from advocating that amount of protection which he thought the position of the country might require. But, looking at the question before him, he did not think it belonged to the category of free-trade measures, or that it should stand upon that principle. It rather should stand upon principles peculiar to itself; and he was about to appeal to hon. Members who professed free-trade principles with the same earnestness with which he should appeal to the Protectionists. The noble Lord had told them on Friday night last that they ought not to confine their attention to the single Act of 1846. He told them they ought to go back to the great Emancipation Act passed in 1834. He entirely agreed with the noble Lord in that opinion; and he should repeat what he said upon a former occasion, that the noble Lord himself was not more anxious than he was to see the provisions of that Act carried out. The noble Lord gave them a very important description of the series of legislation since 1834; and he was sorry to say that, looking at that legislation since that period, and the conduct of successive Governments on the subject, he thought it was a series of events not creditable to this country, and most prejudicial to the unfortunate colonists who had been made the subjects upon which the Governments had tried their political experiments. In 1834, they emancipated the whole slave population. At a later period the Parliament of this country had—he would not say whether wisely or otherwise—adopted the principle of free trade; and, as he thought, most unfairly and unwisely, they had made the sugar-growing colonies the unfortunate victims of both those experiments. In so doing, they were guilty of a breach of faith. It was well expressed by the hon. Member for

Buckinghamshire the other night, out of four conditions which they had made upon the subject with the colonists, the Government had violated three. They had broken their promises made to the colonists at the time of the Emancipation Act. For a series of years they had harassed their colonies upon the subject of increase of labour, and upon the subject of satisfactory labour contracts, to such an extent, that a contract for labour could not be carried out. Thus the colonists suffered from their vacillation; and it was to that vacillation that the sufferings of the colonists could be traced. After that series of most unjust treatment of the colonists, they, in 1846, at length arrived at that final experiment which the right hon. Gentleman opposite had so justly and aptly termed the *coup de grace*—an Act to which he did not hesitate to ascribe a very large portion, and, in his humble judgment, by far the greater portion, although perhaps not the whole, of the great and ruinous depression to which the colonies were now subjected. Complaints came from the colonists in such urgency and in such numbers, that, when the House assembled early in the year, it was found impossible to pass over the distress existing; and the noble Lord the Member for Lynn moved for the appointment of that Committee, which he had since conducted as chairman in a manner which had elicted the admiration of all who sat with him as members of it. When the Committee was appointed, there was a debate, in which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer took part, and he expressed himself in these terms:—

> "But I should deceive both him and the House, and, what is still more material, the West Indians themselves, if I led them to suppose that in consenting to the appointment of this Committee, Her Majesty's Government meant to imply the slightest doubt of the propriety of the course which they adopted in 1846, or the slightest intention of departing from the provisions of that Act. I think it but fair to all parties that this statement should be made as decidedly as possible, and as early as possible, because I believe that upon a subject of this description uncertainty is the worst of evils."

And on the 29th of May, on the day that the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn presented the report to the House, he found the noble Lord the First Lord of the Treasury said, in answer to the hon. Member for Montrose—

> "The report of the Committee which had been presented that evening, recommended, he was informed, that the differential duties should be continued for a certain period beyond that fixed by the Act of 1846. On that subject he could state at once that the Government did not intend to propose any alteration of the Act of 1846, with the view of increasing the amount of the differential duties, or continuing them for a longer period than that fixed by the Act."

That was the language of the Prime Minister, and yet on Friday last, notwithstanding what both he and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said, the noble Lord came down to the House and proposed a plan, which, whatever might be thought of it by different parties, would be certainly a very material deviation from the Act of 1846. Now, he thought he had a right to ask why had that deviation been made? He could not attribute it to any other cause than that the evidence taken before the Committee proved the condition of the case to be of such pressing importance, that the Government found they could not adhere any longer to the Act of 1846. He, therefore, so far congratulated those hon. Gentlemen who were opposed to that Act. But they next came to the question of whether or not the change which the Government proposed would be sufficient to mitigate the distress. He would not detain the House by entering into the question about the differences between equalising the duties in the year 1854 instead of 1851. Neither would he stop to inquire what was the reason why the Government thought the duties might be equalised at 10*s*. the cwt. instead of 14*s*., which was arranged by the Act of 1846. But he did think that every one would agree with him, that the change proposed by the Government, irrespective of its bearings upon the colonial question, involved very important financial considerations. And when the Chancellor of the Exchequer reproached the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, and those others, including himself, who were of the same opinion as the noble Lord, for proposing to give the colonists a 10*s*. differential duty, which could be done by lowering the duty on colonial sugar 4*s*. the cwt., and said that, were such a plan adopted, it would involve very serious financial derangements, he must reply that he thought the plan proposed by the Government was open to the same charge. He did not know how far the right hon. Gentleman might speculate on retaining his present office till 1854; but he thought the right hon. Gentleman would assuredly bequeath to the Chancellor of the Exchequer of that day, whoever he may be, the legacy of having to deal with a very large hiatus in the sugar duties. Perhaps the Government anticipated an increase of consumption which would raise the importation to 400,000 tons a year, the quantity which would be required to bring up the deficiency; but he thought that was a very large and very sanguine calculation. His object, however, was to consider how the question would bear upon the colonies, rather than upon the finances of this country; and how far a differential duty of 7*s.* to descend by 6*d.* a year for three years—how far such a proposal could be considered an adequate remedy for the existing state of things. But, in the first instance, he should call the attention of the Government to the serious inquiry of whether they could be confident enough to say that their arrangement with regard to brown clayed sugar would be available as against Cuba and Brazil. He thought that the muscovado sugar, coming in at a lower duty by 18*d.* than the brown clayed, would be an inducement to those foreign countries to send muscovado rather than brown clayed; and he was borne out in that opinion by the consul (Mr. Crawford), who stated that, for the sake of economy, they were manufacturing the sugar in Cuba after the manner of Jamaica. He considered it very doubtful whether the proposed duty of 7*s.* per cwt., such as it was, would be applicable to the sugar-growing interest of Great Britain. He thought it much more probable that the greater part of the sugar would come in from the foreign countries as muscovado. But he would presently consider also the question whether, as a protective duty, the 7*s.* duty would answer the purpose. He thought it would have no effect in saving from ruin the sugar-growing colonies. In 1846, when the Government first brought forward their scheme, these colonies were in a state of comparative prosperity; and it was under the operation of that very 7*s.* duty in 1846, falling to a 6*s.* duty in 1847, that the present frightful amount of distress had arisen in them. Now, when they were reduced to that state of distress, how could it be supposed that they could be relieved by a mere revival of those very duties under which they had suffered? In the best event they would have, at a 7*s.* duty, only 1*s.* more than they had in 1847; but in bringing in muscovado sugar they would be 6*d.* a cwt. worse. He was sorry to be obliged upon this ground to say that he was driven to the statement that the duty proposed by the Government was wholly insufficient to meet the falling-off of the revenue. In considering the question in its bearings upon the British colonial interest, they should take into account, as the most essential point, the comparative cost of producing sugar in the free-labour British colonies, and in the slave-labour plantations of foreign countries. He regretted to be obliged to go into statistical statements; but he should give a few figures in illustration of that part of his argument. He should beg leave, in the first instance, to refer to the evidence of Mr. Tollemache, and in doing so he should observe that he adverted to that gentleman's evidence, because none could be more truly or faithfully given. Now, that gentleman, in answer to a question as to what further extent he could carry his reductions in the cost of production beyond what he had done, replied that his cost of production, when he had had a large crop, was 19*s.* per cwt. By the reductions he had effected, he reduced the cost in 1847 to 17*s.* 8*d.* per cwt.; and that was after the rum and molasses had been deducted. In a subsequent answer he said, he hoped at some future day—not an early day—but at some future day he hoped to be able to reduce the cost of production so low as 15*s.* 6*d.* the cwt., but that was prospective; and he could not lay down his sugar in London at less than 22*s.* 0¼*d.* per cwt. Now, the price in June, 1847, had varied from 26*s.* to 22*s.*; and how would it be possible for any sugar grower in the colonies, who could not land his sugar in London at a less price than 22*s.* 0¼*d.*, to sell it at 22*s.*? Mr. Tollemache stated it as his decided opinion, that under the circumstances, and so long as such a state of things continued, it would be impossible for the free-labour sugar of the West Indies to compete with the foreign slave-labour of Brazil and Cuba. He would next quote the opinions of other witnesses, who spoke as to the condition of Jamaica and other places. He would not cite any more figures than he could possibly help. He would mention first the average of 138 estates in Jamaica. According to a return made to the House of Assembly of Jamaica, it appeared that the general cost of production was about 1*l.* 2*s.* 7*d.* the cwt. throughout the West Indian colonies. One witness (Mr. Greene) stated the cost of the estates with which he was connected at 1*l.* 2*s.* 9*d.* Another witness (Mr. Wiggins), who overlooked twenty-two estates, stated the cost to average 1*l.* 9*s.* 2*d.*; Mr. Geddes stated it at 1*l.* 3*s.*; Mr. Miles at 1*l.* 8*s.* 2*d.*; and the average cost of production over all Jamaica was 1*l.* 5*s.* 2*d.* That statement was fortified by a despatch which had been forwarded by Governor Sir Charles Grey—the despatch of which they had already heard so much the other night. Governor Grey stated it to be his opinion, that a permanent cost price of less than 30*s.* a cwt. would cause the greater portion of the cultivation of sugar in the West India islands to drop. The Governor of Trinidad, Lord Harris, stated 1*l.* 5*s.* 10*d.* as the cost of production. In Barbadoes the witnesses variously stated the cost on different estates at, 1*l.* 9*s.* 5*d.*, 1*l.* 5*s.* 5*d.*, 1*l.* 4*s.* 11*d.*, 1*l.* 5*s.* 10*d.*, 1*l.* 3*s.*, giving an average cost of production of 1*l.* 5*s.* 8*d.* for Barbadoes and British Guiana. The cost in St. Vincent was 1*l.* 1*s.* 5*d.*; in St. Kitt's, 1*l.* 1*s.* 10*d.*, giving the general average of 1*l.* 2*s.* 8*d.* as the cost of production in the West Indian colonies. Now, for the average cost of production in slave-growing countries, the noble Lord at the head of the Colonial Department had caused an inquiry to be directed to the various consuls in the foreign slave-growing countries, with a view to ascertaining the cost of production. But he did not think they had given the noble Lord a fair estimate of the cost, inasmuch as those estimates were given without the deductions which had been made from all the estimates given to the Committee, of the cost of producing sugar in the West Indies. Their estimates also related to the brown clayed sugars, whereas the cost of producing muscovado would be one-fifth less. The cost of producing sugar in Cuba, after making these deductions, would be 6*s.* 8½*d.* per cwt.; in Porto Rico, 5*s.* 2*d.* per cwt.; and in Bahia, 8*s.* 9*d.* per cwt.; leaving the average of the cost of producing sugar in these slave countries, 6*s.* 10½*d.* per cwt. Now, if 6*s.* 10½*d.* were deducted from 1*l.* 2*s.* 8*d.*, the cost of producing sugar in the British settlements, there remained 15*s.* 9½*d.* as the difference between the cost of producing sugar at the present time in the slave countries and in the British colonies. He was sorry to have detained the House with these figures, but the conclusion which they had led him to arrive at was this, that as long as there remained a difference of 15*s.* 9½*d.* per cwt. between the cost of producing in Cuba and Brazil and in the British colonies, it would be impossible for the latter to compete with slave-grown sugar while they had only a protection of 7*s.* or 5*s.* 6*d.*, or whatever it might be. He felt, therefore, that the scheme now proposed by the Government could not possibly afford anything like a sufficient protection to the West India colonists. There could be no doubt but that the colonies had a right to complain of the manner in which the Act of 1846 had been carried. That Act was passed for the exclusive advantage of this country. It was passed to carry out one of the greatest experiments that could be made—that of trying how far free labour could compete with slave labour; and why, therefore, did they not accompany it with some provision for supplying free labour to the colonies? It was no new complaint that the colonies wanted more labour, and it was but an act of justice to them to establish that fair relation between the employer and the employed which existed in this country, and which ought to exist in every country. The Government ought also to have put an end at the same time to the system of squatting which had proved so injurious to the colonies. He admitted that during the last year some progress had been made by the noble Lord at the head of the Colonial Office in supplying labour to the colonies. One of the provisions adopted was, that captured Africans should be delivered free of charge in Jamaica; but that was an arrangement that was obviously open to great abuse. He understood that the noble Lord now proposed allowing contracts for the engagement of free labourers as a part of his plan. [Lord JOHN RUSSELL: I mentioned it as a proposition to stand by itself.] At all events there could be no question but that it was most important that labour should be provided for the colonies. Under the present system it was impossible that the cultivation of the British colonies could go on. He would not trouble the House by going into details; but the purport of all the evidence was that the colonies were now subject to a most ruinous competition. The witnesses showed that if the present prices had prevailed for a number of years past, the cultivation of the estates must have been abandoned ere the present time. He hoped the House would permit him to mention another proof of the working of that Act of 1846. It was a circumstance that had been lately mentioned to him with regard to an estate in Demerara. The estate was sold in 1843 for 25,000*l.*, and it had subsequently had 10,000*l.* expended upon it in improvements. The sale in 1843 was under a fiat of bankruptcy; and in April last the same estate was again sold by auction under a bankruptcy sale, when it produced only 2,800*l.* That was an instance of the state to which the West India colonies had been reduced. Looking at the period that had elapsed, and the prices that now prevailed, he believed that he was justified in saying that the whole of this state of things was to be traced to the working of the Act of 1846. He believed that he was right in stating that no less than eighteen mercantile houses of the highest respectability connected with the West Indies had lately become bankrupt; and he feared that if the present state of things continued much longer, other houses must be soon involved in the same state. If such, then, was the state of the West Indian colonies, what, he would ask, was the condition of another important colony? He wished for a moment to draw the attention of the House to the present state of the Mauritius. He would take the evidence of Sir George Larpent on this subject. Sir George Larpent was an avowed free-trader, and he was sure that Gentlemen on the other side of the House would not be disposed to think that he (Sir George Larpent) was likely to take an exaggerated view of this question. Now what was that gentleman's opinion? Sir George Larpent said—

> "From 1838 to the present time, the vacillation of Parliament, the changes of legislation, and the departure from what was understood to be the system to be adopted during the time we laid out our money, and sent out our machinery, and carried on those works, has been such as to bring these enormous losses upon us, I beg distinctly to say, I do not attribute all the losses to the Act of 1846; but when we were getting out of our difficulties that Act of 1846 plunged us back again into them."

The cost of producing sugar in the Mauritius was 20*s.* 10*d.* per cwt., and at such a cost it was impossible for them to compete with the slave countries, where the cost was so low as he had already stated. No less than seven of the first mercantile houses in England that had been connected with that colony had, in consequence, been involved in ruin, their total liabilities amounting to the enormous sum of 3,249,000*l.* Among them were the houses of Sir John Reid, who had so long sat among them in that House, and of Sir George Larpent himself, and others of equally high character, but all alike involved in ruin by the melancholy state to which the colony had been reduced. Leaving the Mauritius, he would turn to the East Indies, and there too he found exactly the same state of things prevailing. He feared that he was trespassing at too great length on the indulgence of the House, and therefore he would not go into details on this part of the question. He found that in consequence of the change that had taken place in 1836, the export of sugar had been constantly on the increase up to 1846. In the year 1836 the amount of sugar exported from the East Indies to this country was 152,165*l.*, while in 1846 the amount had increased to 1,425,114*l.* He found, however, that the cost of the production of sugar was in Bengal 20*s.* per cwt., and in Madras 23*s.* per cwt.; and, looking at the distance of that part of the world, it was evident that these sugars could not be transported to the English market at the prices which they now commanded. Looking at the falling-off in the exports of cotton, and other matters to which he would not now allude, connected with the finances of India, he thought that it was most important that the export of sugar from the East Indies should not be annihilated, as he feared it must be by their present measures. He wished, in the next place, to call some unanswerable witnesses of another class in his favour, namely, the Governors of the colonies themselves. He would, in the first place, allude to the despatches of Lord Harris, the Governor of Trinidad, to whose opinions he was disposed to attach considerable weight. Writing on the 18th of September last to Earl Grey, Lord Harris stated that, without entering into details, he did not hesitate to express his conviction that if the colony was not to be left to subside into a state of comparative barbarism, some more than ordinary relief was necessary to support it in the contest in which it was now engaged. That was the state of the colony in September last, and he need not remind hon. Gentlemen opposite that things had not improved there since. In a despatch from Governor Reid, of Barbadoes, sent home in February last, he said—

> "I think it right, however, to state, in general terms, that from all I learn, the cost of making sugar by free labour is greatly beyond the cost of making it by slave labour. My opinion is, that sugar cultivation by free labour cannot yet withstand competition on equal terms with slave labour, and that freedom should be nursed by protection for a considerable time to come. How long that time should be, your Lordship will understand that I cannot say. If there be no protection, the cultivation of sugar will be further given up in Grenada, and it will dwindle in all

the windward islands, excepting Barbadoes. Whilst travelling in these islands, and amongst estates falling off in production, I felt a conviction that, without protection, the most serious result for humanity would not be the loss of sugar, but that the consummation of the greatest act of human legislation—the abolition of slavery—will be retarded, and perhaps endangered."

In a despatch, dated December last, from Governor Higginson, of Antigua, to Earl Grey, and which that noble Lord had referred to in another place, it was stated that—

"The majority of the estates are heavily encumbered, and very few of the proprietors have capital at command; and the ruinous rate at which they are compelled to borrow, greatly augments the cost of production. I do not believe that, at the present prices, half the gross proceeds of sales are netted by the sugar grower, the larger portion being swallowed up by the duty and the merchant's charges for freight, commission, discounts, &c. The state of the market must regulate the profits and losses of the producer; and if that were to continue as at present, the culture of the cane must necessarily be abandoned, because, as I have before observed, existing prices do not remunerate him for his outlay."

He would now call the attention of the House to a memorial from the House of Assembly of Jamaica to Her Majesty, setting forth their distress. From that memorial it appeared that a sum of 1,405,887*l.* had been expended in the production and manufacture of 57,000 hogsheads of sugar, leaving the average cost per cwt. at 1*l.* 2*s.* 7*d.*, and thus confirming the statement that he had before made on other authorities. The Committee of the House of Assembly proceeded to state, that—

"Your committee submit that the question now left for the British Government to decide is, whether, putting the ruin of the colonists altogether out of view, the national interests will be promoted by annihilating sugar and coffee cultivation in its own colonies, the inevitable effect of which must be, and that speedily, to transfer to foreigners a high-priced monopoly of these articles in the British market."

Governor Light, in a despatch dated Guiana, 23rd May, said, that the distress among a large class of planters was so great, that they had not money to pay for labour for the cultivation of their estates, and that consequently a large portion of the cultivation of the colony should be abandoned; but that one result would be, to throw more labour into the market, which would be beneficial to those who could weather the present storm. He (Sir J. Pakington) could not view with much complacency the benefit that would arise to the few planters who were able to weather the storm from the ruin of the remainder. He had already mentioned the despatch from Sir Charles Grey, in which he laid it down that a permanent price of 30*s.* a cwt. was essential to prevent the greater portion of the sugar plantation of Jamaica from being abandoned; but, unwilling as he was to detain the House, he could not refrain from quoting one other despatch from Lord Harris, that had been briefly alluded to the other evening by his hon. Friend the Member for Bristol. Lord Harris, writing from Trinidad on the 5th of April last, stated that—

"It is pitiable to witness a fine colony daily deteriorating; a land enjoying almost every blessing under heaven, suffering from a shock from which it does not rally. But the deepest pang of all to an Englishman is to see the hearts and the affections of a whole population becoming gradually alienated from the country which he loves."

Lord Harris was then writing from Trinidad, and describing a feeling which must grow up under the circumstances now existing there. Further on, his Lordship said—

"It is impossible for me to express too forcibly the extent of the present distress; but I will give an extract from a communication made to me lately by Mr. Rennie, the very intelligent manager of the Colonial Bank, whose acuteness in business, and whose disinclination to yield to difficulties, is exceeded by none in the colony, and who, from his position, is enabled to acquire a more intimate knowledge of the actual state of affairs than any other person:—'The position of the colony is at the present moment most deplorable; bankruptcy and want stare every one in the face, and an extensive abandonment of estates appears inevitable, after the present crop, unless bold and immediate measures of relief are speedily afforded. Real estate is now perfectly valueless, and cannot be realised at any sacrifice; money has disappeared, and credit is entirely at an end; mercantile engagements can no longer be met, and parties of the highest probity, possessed of ample assets in houses and landed property, are cruelly forced into insolvency, owing to the inconvertibility of real estate.'"

Such was the language of Mr. Rennie; and finding it quoted in the despatch, it should be taken as affording some right to assume that Lord Harris did not greatly dissent from the views which Mr. Rennie laid down. He wished for a moment to revert, in the next place, to an important part of this subject, namely, the effect of the existing laws on the exports of manufactures from this country. He found from a table of exports submitted to the Sugar and Coffee Planting Committee by Mr. Burn, the editor of *Burn's Commercial Glance*, that taking the nineteen months before the passing of the Act of 1846, the value of cotton goods exported to the British colonies amounted to 5,988,544*l.*, while for the nineteen months next after the passing of that Act the amount was 4,856,286*l.*, showing a decrease compared with the corresponding period before the passing of the Act of 1,132,268*l.* During the same period, however, he found that the exports to the slave-labour countries of Cuba, Porto Rico, and Brazil, had increased from 2,490,770*l.* in the nineteen months before the passing of the Act of 1846, to 2,946,151*l.* in the nineteen months subsequent to that period, showing an increase of 455,381*l.* Now, while the exports to their own colonies had fallen off since 1846 to that large amount, they found that the exports to the slave countries had increased; but the increase, however, was not so great but that there was a serious balance against the manufacturers, amounting in the whole to no less than 676,887*l.* But if they could not at present reckon on any advantage to the manufacturers from the policy of the Government, what, he would ask, was likely to be the result to the consumer? He could not deny but that the consumers had derived a great advantage from the low price that sugars had ranged at during the last twelve months. He had before him a statement, taken from a quarter with which he was sure hon. Gentlemen opposite would not quarrel—he alluded to the *Economist.* It was a list of the quantities of sugar grown in the various quarters of the world. He would not trouble the House with the details; but he thought he had a right to state, that if the distress which he had already alluded to existed in the West India colonies, in the Mauritius, and in the East Indies, the result must necessarily be, if that distress continued, that the cultivation of sugar must cease in large districts of the British possessions; and then, after having driven their own producer out of the market, the consumer would be left exposed to any overcharge of price that the slave-labour countries might think fit to demand. The subject was one which it was impossible to treat of shortly, but he had been as brief as he possibly could. He felt now obliged to turn to another branch of the question, and he did so with feelings of pain and humiliation which it was impossible for him to describe. He alluded to the important and interesting portion of the subject that was connected with the question of slavery and the slave trade. He had expressed on Friday evening his astonishment that the First Minister of the Crown should have come down to that House, and have made a statement on such a subject as the present, without making a single allusion to the question of slavery; but on farther consideration, he felt bound to say, that he did not feel so much surprise as at first that the noble Lord should have endeavoured to avoid the question. It was no part of his object to offer any party opposition to the noble Lord. He believed that the noble Lord and all Her Majesty's Ministers were sincere in entertaining the feeling that was so common to all Englishmen, of being anxious to put down slavery. But he was satisfied that the noble Lord must have felt the difficulty of approaching this part of the subject, knowing, as he must, that every prophecy that had been announced against the measure of 1846 had been fulfilled as to its tendency to increase slavery and the slave trade. It now became his duty to repeat those charges. His right hon. Friend the Member for Tamworth, in the speech which he made in 1846 on this question, distinctly stated it as his opinion that the inevitable consequence of the measure then pending would be to increase the slave trade. In the other House of Parliament—and he believed he was in order in alluding to the matter, as it was recorded on the journals of the House—a protest had been recorded against the measure, attached to which he found the name of no less a personage than the Lord Chief Justice of England—one who was not at all disposed to support the views of that (the Opposition) side of the House. He found also attached to that protest the name of a right rev. Prelate, who, together with the name of Wilberforce, inherited that hatred of slavery which had conferred such a distinction upon it. He alluded to this subject with pain; but if this greatest measure in which England had been engaged, was to be abandoned for the fanciful success of a political theory, or for the monetary advantage of a halfpenny a pound in the price of sugar, he would call upon the House of Commons to interpose, and not to depart from those high principles which were alone worthy of Parliamentary support. And he should say, that it was satisfactory to him to think that the names of Wilberforce and Buxton were still to be found in the two Houses of Parliament to follow up the efforts of their predecessors in the cause of freedom, which had already conferred such a lustre on the names they bore. As he had brought this charge against the Government, of having by their policy advanced the slave trade, he felt bound to support it by evidence; and the first witness that he would call was the noble Lord whom he did not now see in his place, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The noble Lord was called as a witness before the Sugar and Coffee Plantation Committee, and he stated that in the year 1846 no less than 55,000 slaves had been imported into the Brazils, and that in 1847 a similar number, if he recollected rightly, had been imported, making 110,000 slaves imported into Brazil in these two years: whereas the average number imported between 1840 and 1845 inclusive, was only 32,000 per annum. Another witness examined before the Committee went farther, and said that 75,000 slaves were imported into Brazil in 1847. In confirmation of this view he would refer to a return, which he ought not to omit mentioning, of the amount of machinery sent from Great Britain to those slave-growing countries. In 1844 the value of the machinery exported to Cuba was 6,573*l.*, and to Brazil, 17,505*l.*; but it gradually increased until the year 1847, when the value of the machinery exported to Cuba amounted to 17,664*l.*, and to Brazil to 35,152*l.* Here again was evidence of the impulse given by our legislation to the produce of sugar in those slave countries. He should now turn to the evidence of a most important witness on this subject, Captain Matson of the Royal Navy—a gentleman, who, he believed, had seen more service upon the coast of Africa, and captured more slaves, than any other officer in Her Majesty's service. It so happened that Captain Matson was accidentally at Havana, when the intelligence of the passing of the Act of 1846 arrived there; and in the course of his examination before the Committee, this question was put to him:—

> "You are of opinion, are you not, that the change in the laws of this country, admitting slave-grown sugar, has been one cause of very much stimulating the slave trade?—Very much: I was at Havana when the news arrived.
>
> "What was the feeling of the Havana?—A feeling of rejoicing universally; the price of slaves very much increased, and so did the price of land. I saw both British merchants, slave merchants, and some of my old friends the slave captains (that is, British merchants, Spanish slave merchants, slave captains, &c.), they all told the same story, and the latter spoke with great glee.
>
> "It was a day of jubilee there?—It was."

And he also believed it was a day of jubilee. Such was the view taken by the people of Havana when they heard of the Act of 1846 having been passed. Captain Matson was afterwards asked—

> "Can you give the Committee any information upon the mode in which the slaves are usually packed in the slavers?—They are packed as closely as salt fish; they are doubled up and stowed as closely as they can in the night, when they are obliged to go below.
>
> "Are they in irons?—The men are generally in irons; it depends upon the part of the coast they are taken from.
>
> "The north coast is the most difficult, is it not?—Yes; in the Bight of Benin and Gallinas they are the most savage race. I have seen many cargoes from the neighbourhood of Congo go without any irons at all.
>
> "The ordinary practice is, is it not, that where a slavetrader calculates upon carrying 300 slaves to the other shore, he embarks 500?—Yes; that is for the purpose of putting them to the test. It is impossible for the most practised eye to tell a healthy from an unhealthy slave; but the trader reckons that during the first 48 hours those slaves that are unhealthy, and who would not stand the voyage across the Atlantic will sicken; and supposing the vessel will take 300, crowded, he would put 500 on board, making sure that during the first 48 hours they will be sufficiently weeded to leave a prime cargo. As the slave sickens during the first 48 hours, they leave him on deck, and give him nothing to eat, but let him die, and then throw him overboard.
>
> "As soon as they begin to sicken they are put on one side?—Yes; weeding them, as it is called. Those who get over the first 48 hours will go across the Atlantic; and perhaps but one of them dies in a week."

He was afterwards asked—

> "Can you account for their sickening and dying so very soon; if an European went on board however sick he might be he would not die so soon from going to sea?—It is the change and the effect of the crowding; they die principally from dysentery; they cannot be fed so well, their victuals are not cooked so well, and the weaker their constitution the sooner they sicken; in fact, it is the only means that a slavetrader has of ensuring the taking a prime cargo across. Of course the sickly slaves would not die so soon if they had nourishment."

The next question Captain Matson was asked was—

> "What seized vessel would they embark 500 slaves in; a vessel of how many tons?"

His answer was—

> "I took a vessel with 427 slaves on board, of 49 tons."

Perhaps he might be told this was nothing new, and that he was only repeating the oft-told tale of the horrors of the middle passage. He was sorry to say, that these cruelties were committed under the sanction of the Government of this country. It was here in England, where we had made such noble efforts for the suppression of the accursed traffic of the slave trade, that by the encouragement of the Government it had been renewed, and things been brought to the pass which Captain Matson in this frightful evidence disclosed. God forbid he should charge upon the noble Lord or upon the Government any such intention as this! but he entreated them to pause in the legislation upon which they were embarked, to turn their attention to this part of the subject, and see the conclusion which must be drawn from the statements now offered to the House. With regard to Cuba, it was notorious that previous to 1846 the slave trade there had almost entirely ceased. He believed he might say it had altogether ceased, because the transport from Africa to Cuba was much more difficult than it was to Brazil. It was a longer voyage, and it required a more costly vessel. But what had our legislation done? Captain Matson was asked—

> "What do you think would be the most advisable course to pursue with regard to Cuba?—Two years ago there was no such thing as a slave trade in Cuba; it is only within the last twelve months that there has been any slave trade whatever.
>
> "It is the alteration of the law that has produced it?—Yes; it is the alteration in the demand for their sugar. That has affected Cuba much more than it did Brazil, because they could not afford to carry on the slave trade; at Brazil they could, because they did it at so much less cost; they gave next to nothing for an old vessel, and very few hands could navigate her; while from Cuba it required a fine vessel, well manned, to take very few slaves. Eighteen months ago, I think for a year before that, there had not been more than one or two solitary instances of slaves being landed at Cuba.
>
> "In your opinion, the resurrection of the slave trade in Cuba is to be ascribed entirely to the stimulus given by the alteration in the laws admitting slave-grown sugar?—In Cuba I think so entirely."

So that it was clearly under the operation of the Act of 1846 that the slave trade in Cuba had revived. Mr. Higgins, a gentleman well known in connexion with the West Indies, had given evidence upon this subject. This gentleman stated he had lately been in Cuba, and had had an opportunity of witnessing the working of slave labour there. He said they worked their slaves eighteen hours per day, and that, during the latter part of the time, they were goaded to work by the lash; that the people in the field "are stimulated by a driver or mayoral on horseback, armed with sword and whip;" and that, in fact, they were hunted by dogs. Mr. Higgins said that unless he had actually seen it, he could not have conceived anything in the human form so degraded as he found the slave population of the island of Cuba. Here, again, in this gentleman's evidence there was proof of the operation of that system which we were doing all we could to encourage by our legislation. He would next turn to the reports sent home by British consuls in these slaveholding countries. Our consul at Rio, Mr. Porter, our consul at Bahia, the Governor of Sierra Leone, Mr. Hooper, our consul at Pernambuco, Sir T. Herbert, our admiral at Monte Video, and the commissioners at the Havana, all agreed in saying that the slave trade was now in full activity. He thought he was now justified in saying he had proved the charge with which he commenced, that the prophecies of 1846 had been literally fulfilled, and that the result of that measure, however little contemplated or desired by the Government, had been to give a most fearful stimulus to slavery and the slave trade. In his opening speech on Friday night the noble Lord passed over in silence this part of the subject; but the indignant language that followed induced him, in his reply, to advert to it. And what did the noble Lord say? Why, merely that he hoped and believed that the triumph of free labour over slave labour must be the means ultimately of destroying slavery and the slave trade. He assured the noble Lord he desired as ardently as he did to see the day when the great experiment of free labour would be successful; when the free grower could undersell the slave grower; but we were not likely to accomplish that great object under such legislation as the present Government had carried on either in 1846, or such as they were now attempting to carry out in 1848. If they wished to exterminate the odious traffic of the slave trade, they must cautiously shape their legislation in such a manner as to allow the British grower ultimately to be in a position to compete with the slave grower; and until that day arrived, they must give him such a protection as would enable him to enter into free competition. He had to express his gratitude to the House for the attention with which they had listened to him during a statement which he had felt little able to make, and during a great part of which he had been compelled to dwell upon very dry topics. He had endeavoured to show, and he trusted he had been successful, that the present depression of the colonies had arisen from our own legislation, and that we must endeavour to place them in a position to compete with slave labour, if we desired to see them successful. He had endeavoured to show, and he thought he had succeeded, that the consequences of the legislation of that House as it now stood, if they were about to persevere in it, must be, as their past legislation had been, to increase slavery and the slave trade. He implored them to retrace their steps upon that point before it was too late. He implored them to retrace their steps as they valued the prosperity of those great dependencies of the British Crown, and the character, the reputation, and the consistency of this Christian land. Before he sat down he must say, and he said it with deep feeling, that whatever might be the ultimate decision of this House, he prayed that their deliberations upon this anxious subject might "conduce to the honour, the welfare, and the safety of our Sovereign and her dominions."

Sir E. N. BUXTON rose to second the Amendment proposed by his hon. Friend, though, perhaps, it was possible that he might approach this subject with views not altogether identical with those which his hon. Friend entertained. He did not altogether agree with his hon. Friend, when he said that this country had committed an injustice against the West Indies in depriving them for two years of apprenticeship, and that upon that account we were bound to grant them increased protection. The fact was that the Government was originally opposed to that alteration, but the country found out, when it had given 20,000,000*l.* to insure freedom, that freedom had not been given to the slave; that the grossest abuses prevailed during apprenticeship, which was in effect slavery, and consequently it was determined to do away with the two remaining years of apprenticeship. He must also say that he agreed in this Amendment of his hon. Friend with some difficulty, because he was quite satisfied that the policy which justice and humanity demanded was the policy pursued by this country up to 1846, namely, the system by which we excluded altogether sugar produced by slaves, and admitted sugar which was the produce of free labour in foreign countries. Had it been possible to regain that course of policy, which he believed to be the true one, he should not have hesitated to propose an Amendment in that sense; and he did not despair of seeing the day when that policy might be resumed by this country. He was well aware, however, that there were strong arguments against the adoption of such a course, and that Her Majesty's Government had declared in the strongest manner that there were treaties which would prevent its being carried out. Men, however, of great eminence, like Lord Aberdeen, had expressed a different opinion on the subject of those treaties. There was great importance, however, in the argument that they were, by their legislation, practically stimulating the slave trade. It might be many years before the price of free-grown sugar would be lower than the price of slave-grown; at the same time he was satisfied, looking at recent events upon the Continent, and the total breaking down of credit there, we should have had a great hold upon Cuba and Brazil if we had been able to say to them, "We will not give you our market so long as you retain slavery and the slave trade; but we will, if you abolish slavery and emancipate your slaves." There being, however, the greatest difficulties to an adoption of that line of policy, he felt that if he could not secure all, the best he could do was to take the Amendment of the hon. Baronet, which he thought must have the effect of giving a great encouragement to free-labour sugar in our own colonies, and the further effect of checking and suppressing the slave trade, which at present was extremely profitable in Brazil and Cuba. On this ground, whilst he differed in some degree on matters of principle from the hon. Baronet, it was that he united with him on his Motion. The hon. Baronet had gone through the whole subject of the West Indies so ably and so fully, as to leave him but little ground to occupy. In quoting, however, the despatch of Lord Harris, his hon. Friend omitted the following paragraph, which he thought should be noticed:—

> "It is sad and painful to behold men expecting ruin quickly to overtake them; it is, perhaps, sadder and more painful to see them struggling and toiling against adversity, but with their energies dulled, and their arms palsied, from the knowledge that their labours must be unremunerative, and that failure can be the sole result; it is most distressing to witness this, and at the same time to be aware that much of the misery from which they are suffering, and that which awaits them, is of a nature which they are unable to avert by any acts of their own."

He quoted this passage, because it seemed to him to describe the condition of the whole of the West Indies at this moment; and because he feared it was utterly impossible but that a large portion of them—perhaps two-thirds—he imagined the final result would be one-half—must be given up for sugar cultivation. The chief remedy proposed by Her Majesty's Government for this miserable condition was to guarantee a loan for immigration from the coast of Africa. From what his noble Friend had said on this subject, the House might almost be led to think that nothing had hitherto been done in this respect. And when the noble Lord urged it as something to take the place of protection, that 500,000*l.* would be guaranteed, he could hardly have been aware that in the colony of the Mauritius a sum of 900,000*l.* had been expended for immigration; that 95,000 Coolies had been imported there during the last ten years; and that the cultivation of Mauritius had doubled since slavery was abolished: yet, in spite of all this, it was at this moment in a state of ruin and bankruptcy. It was true that immigration into the West Indies had not been so great; but from 1834 to 1847 it had been as follows:—Jamaica, 12,200; British Guiana, 47,700; Trinidad, 19,9000; making nearly 80,000. The returns, however, were imperfect, and he calculated that the whole number would amount to 90,000. This was what had already been done in this way; and it was now seen what had been the result. They had also the opinion of men well able to give advice to the Government and country on this subject. Governor Lord Harris, writing to Earl Grey, dated Trinidad, 21st of February, 1848, said—

> "It is questionable, under present circumstances, whether immigration can, or, if so, whether it ought to be continued; and it is still more questionable, if it be true, as I am informed, that orders have already been received for one-third of the estates in the colony to be thrown out of cultivation after the present crop. But if it is to continue, when is it to cease? . . . . To compete with the slaveowner, it is not only cheap but continuous labour which the planter requires, and of which he at present cannot be certain, but which he is obliged to use all methods in endeavours to obtain . . . . I would here call your Lordship's attention to the result of the policy which has been carried on, and how, by it, the finances of the colony have been reduced; how its means have been consumed in a most extravagant and but very partially successful system of immigration. To this has everything been sacrificed; and for the sake of getting an extended cane cultivation, which is now on the point of being abandoned, all improvements, even the most important, have been neglected."

It was true this country would be liable, in the first instance, for the 500,000*l.*; but it was to be a charge on the revenue of the colonies, and therefore all those arguments which Lord Harris so forcibly urged against previous immigration held good with reference to the system now to be adopted by the Government. He cordially joined in the recommendation that the immigrants should be imported at the expense of those for whose benefit they were to be employed. At all events, under the present state of the West Indies no great benefit could be expected from immigration. He had various other statements respecting the payment of wages. Lord Harris, in a despatch to Earl Grey, dated Trinidad, February 21, 1848, said it would have been impossible to enforce the payment of the monthly tax—

> "in consequence of their inability to pay, for the wages of numbers have been in arrears for a long time, as much as three or four months."

A Baptist missionary wrote from St. Anne's Bay, Jamaica, under date the 5th of March last—

> "Jamaica certainly does not want labourers. There are some planters in this parish who own that labourers are not so much wanted as money. There are vast numbers of persons in this parish who cannot get work; many have to leave for other and distant districts to secure work, and in some places, where work is given the wages are not forthcoming. I could mention several cases in which labourers have had to wait weeks and months for their money."

Lord Harris to Earl Grey, dated Trinidad, March 8, 1848, wrote—

> "It is frequently very difficult to arrive at the truth with respect to the differences which occur as to the nonpayment of wages, but cases in which there were strong reasons for supposing that the Coolies have not received the full amount due to them have come before me. I speak not of the present time, because the nonpayment of wages is now almost universal, from the inability of the planters to procure money."

In alluding to a particular case his Lordship said—

> "As far as I could learn they had received neither wages, clothing, nor medical aid, and but the smallest modicum of food;—"

and added, in reference to numerous other cases—

> "A stranger to the facts will hardly credit the negligence which has been manifested in this respect"—

namely, the proper care of immigrants. Governor Light to Earl Grey, dated Demerara, April 4, 1848, wrote—

> "The distress of some of the planters may, perhaps, cause the Creoles to hold back their labour for fear of nonpayment of wages."

The Government Secretary, in forwarding a return from the same colony for the first three months of this year, remarked—

> "Eight estates had no Creoles in January; six had none in February; one had none in March, for want of means to pay wages."

A Committee which sat on this subject had unanimously resolved that a necessity existed for an immediate and great application of relief. No one could say that immigration now to be begun, the effect of which could not be much for years to come, was an immediate or great application of relief. It was utterly impossible that any living man could say that this proposed assistance was an answer to the demand made by the Committee over which the noble Lord presided for an immediate and great application of relief; and, looking at the condition of the West Indies, and the policy of this country, which had been so changeable, it was his conviction that the principles of free trade ought to have been applied to those colonies with much greater caution than they had been. The great motive, however, which induced him to take up this question was his feeling that in it was involved that great principle of justice, humanity, and religion, which led this country forty years ago to abolish the slave trade. He considered the question was, whether we were in future to be dependent for a large proportion of our sugar upon our own colonies, which produced it by free labour, or upon colonies which produced it by the most cruel and brutal slavery the world ever saw, and thus revive a trade unparalleled for enormity. On this part of the subject the hon. Baronet had almost supplanted his argument. It had been shown that prior to 1846 the slave trade had decreased; but since the Act of that year the slave trade had greatly increased, and the slavetraders and sugar producers in Cuba and Brazil were in a condition of almost unparalleled prosperity. According to Mr. Bandinell's evidence, from 1840 to 1845, the yearly average importation of slaves into Brazil was 32,600; in 1846, the importation of slaves was 64,000; in 1847, 63,000. He thought that with respect to the Brazils, at least, every person in England must admit, that since the promulgation of the Act admitting slave-grown sugar into this country, slavery in that country had at least doubled. In Cuba, where previous to the passing of that Act slavery had entirely ceased, it had, he admitted, not increased to the extent that might have been anticipated; but that he believed might be accounted for in a great measure by the hurricane in 1844, by which a vast number of coffee plantations were destroyed; and in consequence great numbers of slaves have been transferred from the cultivation of coffee to the cultivation of sugar. Upon this subject, Her Majesty's Commissioners, writing to Lord Palmerston, from the Havana, on the 9th of March, 1847, said—

> "We regret to say that there are manifest tokens of the slavedealers again resuming their former practices, two vessels having been despatched, we are positively informed, for the coast, though we have not been made acquainted with their names. We do not therefore feel authorised to name them upon suspicions of our own, the two we suspect being cleared ostensibly, one on the 2nd of February for Barcelona, and the other on the 28th for New Orleans. We hear also, that two others have been sent direct to the coast from Spain. Respecting these movements, therefore, we have to exert our utmost diligence in obtaining proper information. If the present price of sugar continue, there will be such strong inducements for an extended cultivation, and in consequence such a demand for labour as will make the slavedealers and others run all risks whatever to supply it. The returns afforded the sugar planters now are such as to make us astonished that they do not draw even a greater number of persons to engage in its production."

Again, on the 9th of April, 1847, they said—

> "We are credibly informed that no fewer than seven have lately sailed for that purpose, and that several others are fitting out. The great demand for slaves, in the present enormous profits to be derived by the cultivation of sugar, will of a certainty induce these parties to encounter every risk to obtain the labourers required, and a continued vigilance will therefore be necessary to defeat their practices, as heretofore."

He thought it was not necessary to go further into this question. He was perfectly satisfied that every independent man who looked at the subject with an unbiassed mind, would see that, whether taking Cuba or Brazil, it was manifestly and undoubtedly true that we must now make up our minds that if we admitted their sugar to open and equal competition with the sugar of our colonies, a very great increase on the African slave trade would be the result. During the last year 38,000 tons of sugar were admitted into this country from Cuba; and he believed, looking at the depression of our colonies, and at the orders which had gone out that cultivation should cease, and estates be given up, that it was not too much to expect that within a year from this time we should be using slave-grown sugar at the rate of at least 100,000 tons per annum. He confessed that it was his opinion, indeed, that after a time the quantity which we should use would be much greater even than that. But he was of opinion that the great misery which we inflicted upon a large number of our fellow-creatures by encouraging the slave trade, was not at all called for by the necessities of the occasion. Every year, hitherto, the produce of our colonies had been equal to the demand, and during last year he found that an enormous increase took place in the production, the colonies being enabled to produce a quantity of sugar greater by about 40,000 tons than in any previous year, whether during the periods of slavery or free trade. [Lord J. RUSSELL: That was under the Act of 1846.] The noble Lord said that that was under the Act of 1846. In reply to that, however, he would say that it was an impossibility such an effect could have been produced in so short a time as could have elapsed since the passing of that Act. He was himself a free-trader like the noble Lord. But he would say of free trade as Pope said of riches, that it was—

> . . . . "in effect
> No grace of heaven, or token of th' elect."

He confessed he had entered upon this subject with very painful feelings; for he could not but see that those high principles by which this country had been guided for many years were now supplanted by others which, though important in themselves, were far inferior to those principles on which he had acted in former years. He would willingly admit that it was the duty of that House to supply our great labouring population with all the necessaries and all the comforts of life in as great abundance and at as low a price as possible. He believed that it was eminently the duty of that House to do all in their power to effect that object; but at the same time he did believe most confidently that if the people of England had the question fairly put before them, and were clearly made to understand that by cheap sugar was meant slave-grown sugar, which must be had at the expense of the blood and happiness of the slave, they would willingly give a higher price for the produce of the freeman. The character of this country must suffer in the eyes of foreign nations, who would say that all our professions and wishes to put down the slave trade were not carried out in our actions. The following were the sentiments expressed in the Congress of the United States on recent British legislation, extracted *verbatim* from the *Times* of May 31, under the head "America:"—

> "Mr. Calhoun replied: He had no doubt it was formerly the intention of Great Britain to abolish slavery everywhere, but since that time, there had been a momentous change of opinion and policy on the part of Great Britain. The whole Act of Abolition was now openly denounced in Parliament, and in language as strong as he himself had used. Great Britain was now resorting to the slave trade itself, as the means of promoting the prosperity of her plantations."

Very different was the language of Dr. Channing, ten years before—

> "Great Britain, loaded with an unprecedented debt, and with a grinding taxation, contracted a new debt of 100,000,000 dollars, to give freedom, not to Englishmen, but to the degraded African. I know not that history records an act so disinterested, so sublime. In the progress of ages England's naval triumphs will shrink into a more and more narrow space in the records of our race. This moral triumph will fill a broader, brighter page."

He did not despair that the House of Commons which passed the Act of 1846, under the impression that it would not have the effect of increasing the slave trade—now that they found that it had that effect—now that they discovered their lamentable error—would retrace their steps, and pass resolutions which would, at least in some degree, tend to revive and encourage the innocent and free cultivation of our colonies, and to repress the foul and murderous cultivation of Cuba and Brazil.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I have listened, Sir, with great attention to the speech of the hon. Gentleman opposite, and also to that of my hon. Friend behind me, to understand what is the measure which the hon. Gentleman (Sir J. Pakington) would suggest that we ought to adopt, or what proposition, with respect to protection, he wishes to lay before the House as a substitute for the proposal of Her Majesty's Government. That he merely proposes to negative the proposition of the Government, and leave the existing law as it is, I conceive, considering the views he entertains, to be a thing impossible. But surely a fairer course than he has taken would be, to adopt the proposal of the Committee of which he was a member, which was composed of Gentlemen who no doubt paid great attention to this subject, and who have made a recommendation on the subject. That would have been a natural course to have taken; and that is the course which I understood him to indicate on a former night that he would take; but he has changed his mind; he now puts his Motion in a shape which he hopes will catch a vote or two, and he leaves the question as indefinite at the close of his address as when he first rose. At this moment accordingly, after the utmost attention on my part, I am utterly unable to conceive what he proposes to be done for the benefit of the planters, or what the protection is which he proposes to extend to them. My hon. Friend behind me (Sir E. Buxton) says that his Motion is, if we would agree to carry it out, to enforce the total exclusion of slave-grown sugar from this country. He would act upon the theory of the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire, who has stated to the House that when the Act for the emancipation of the slaves was passed, in 1834, the Houses of Parliament and the country entered into a contract with the West India planters, first, to pay the 20,000,000*l.* for their slaves, and next, to give them a permanent monopoly of the English market. Now, that is a clear and intelligible proposition, and I have always admitted that such a course would be consistent with the principle which some Gentlemen in the House entertained at the time, that if we chose to take away the slaves of the planters, we were bound to make proper compensation. It was argued, however, by others, and among them by Lord Stanley, that the compensation then given was a full compensation. ["No, no!"] I say it was so argued by Lord Stanley—and he stated the grounds of his opinion—whether you admit it or not. You might, of course, have given them the further compensation of the monopoly of the English market, by the perpetual exclusion of foreign sugar; and that would have been a consistent course for the hon. Gentleman opposite to have pursued. But the House of Commons on former occasions has decided against that perpetual exclusion of foreign sugar, and against the maintenance of a perpetual high protecting duty. If it were true that by the contract of 1834 the West India planters were to have exclusive possession of the English market, that contract was broken in 1844, for it is an actual breach of such a contract to have any foreign sugar of any description admitted to compete with the grower of colonial sugar. My hon. Friend behind me has admitted, in accordance with what every man of common sense must hold, that the Act of 1844 did give positive encouragement to the produce of slave-grown sugar; and on this point I must say that the noble Lord opposite misunderstood what I stated the other night on this subject. What I then stated was—and I have the fact now before me, in a document which I hold in my hand—that in the last year 3,000 tons of sugar, the produce of slave labour, were admitted, and which we were obliged to admit, under treaties with the countries where it was grown. But let me recall to the House the opinion of the present Lord Harrowby, who moved the well-known resolution on this subject in 1841, and whose sincerity in the anti-slavery cause no one will doubt. What was his opinion of the Act of 1844? He said—

> "The market of Hamburgh was open to the sugar of Cuba, and it would be found that the encouragement given by this country to Java was, in the Hamburgh market, an encouragement given to Cuba sugar. The distinction of free and of slave-grown sugar was a fallacy, by adopting which they might gratify their feelings, but they would not obtain their object."

I recollect he said you might as well attempt to take a spoonful of water out of one side of a basin, in the expectation that it would not be filled up from the other side, as to hope that when you took only free-grown sugar into consumption in this country, the slave-grown sugar would not be taken up by the rest of Europe. It is, in fact, a direct encouragement to slave-grown sugar—an encouragement just as certain, though not of course quite to the same extent, as if you took it to yourself. I do not mean to say that the Act of 1846 did not give further encouragement to slave-grown sugar. But if you stand upon the contract you say was made with the planters, then I say that the first breach of that contract which the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire complains of, was made in 1844; and therefore it does not lie with those who supported the Act of 1844 to say that they will oppose all legislation which in any way whatever gives encouragement to slave-grown sugar. It may seem strange to my hon. Friend behind me (Sir E. Buxton), but there was no person, so far as I can find, who opposed that measure on the ground of wishing to put down slavery. I do not believe that even the hon. Baronet the Member for the University of Oxford (Sir R. Inglis) made this a ground of opposition on that occasion; but at least no division took place on such a ground in opposition to the Bill. It is not only Lord Harrowby, however, whose opinion I have to offer, but I may adduce the evidence of one of the witnesses examined before the Committee on the Sugar Duties, a gentleman of great credit and intelligence, whose name has often been mentioned in this House—I mean Mr. Greene, who, speaking of the result likely to be produced by the admission of slave-grown sugar, says—

> "I believe in a great measure that it will make very little difference; but I do consider it will make a difference. I do not consider the difference will be very much if free-labour foreign sugar were to be admitted here, and slave-grown sugar excluded."

I also admit that there must be a difference, although but very little, in the encouragement given to slave-labour, whether slave-labour sugar or only free-labour sugar is admitted for consumption in this country. But what were the grounds on which the Act of 1844 was passed? It was on the ground of the inadequate supply of colonial sugar, and of the high prices paid for their sugar by the people of this country. That is not my statement. It was the statement of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, then the Chancellor of the Exchequer, himself a West India proprietor (Mr. Goulburn). The hon. Baronet opposite has stated, and my hon. Friend behind me (Sir E. Buxton) has repeated the assertion, that the colonial produce was always sufficient for the consumption of the country. It is difficult to know how to estimate the capability of the consumption of the country; but if we will only look a very few years back, and see the consumption of the country then as compared with what it is now, and at the same time consider the constantly increasing population, we must admit that so monstrous a proposition as that colonial sugar has always supplied the consumption of this country has seldom been made in this House. In 1840 the consumption of sugar in this country was 179,000 tons; last year it was 289,000 tons—an increase of 110,000 tons in those seven years. In 1842 the consumption was 193,000 tons, being an increase of 96,000 tons in five years, or, in other words, an increase equal to one-half of the whole consumption of 1842. I therefore assert that in 1842 the supply of colonial sugar was not adequate to the consumption of this country; and I think that if the quantity consumed has increased by one-half in five years, as these figures show it has done, there being consumed in 1842 only 193,000 tons, while in 1847 there were 289,000 tons, it must be admitted that the supply of sugar was in the former of these years quite inadequate for the country. [MR. GOULBURN: Take the year 1847.] I do not deny the fact with respect to the year 1847; but the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman was that the colonial supply was always equal to the demand; and, although it might be found to be so in one year, I cannot on that account admit the correctness of the inference as to all former years. And now with regard to 1846, when we proposed the present law. At that period the principles of free trade had made great progress. Between 1844 and 1846, when the Bill was proposed, free trade had greatly advanced, and there were hardly any persons except those who voted with the noble Lord the Member for Lynn who did not distinctly avow that the principle of permanent protection against slave-grown sugar must be given up. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Tamworth stated that view most distinctly; and the hon. Member for Leominster (Mr. Barkly), as distinctly as he could utter it, said, "I am for free trade in sugar as I was for free trade in corn." The protection in corn having been given up, the hon. Member for Leominster very consistently said, that having voted for free trade in corn, he would vote for free trade in sugar also. Many other Gentlemen held the same view, though they contended for a gradual change, in order to enable those most interested to accommodate themselves to their altered circumstances; but the principle of protection was entirely given up, except by those Gentlemen who voted with the noble Lord the Member for Lynn; and therefore I am entitled to assume that the great majority of this House are decidedly against the principle of permanent protection. I must say, that though I agree with the hon. Gentleman opposite in the strong expressions he has used as to the horrors of slavery and the slave trade, still I think the question is not what those horrors are, or even whether there may have been a temporary increase to the slave trade since 1846. I suspect the hon. Gentleman has somewhat overstated that increase; for I believe it will be found that the number of slaves imported in 1847 hardly exceeded those imported in 1846; and I apprehend that the Act of 1846 had little effect on the importation of slaves in that year. If the increase in the importation was owing to any Act at all, it was owing rather to the Act of 1844 than to that of 1846. The great question is, by what means is slavery ultimately to be put down? And I entirely agree with my noble Friend near me, and with the opinion expressed by many Gentlemen in this House, that you will never succeed in putting down slavery, unless you beat it by the superior cheapness of free labour. You have been endeavouring to put down slavery by compulsory means, and the late Sir F. Buxton expressed himself satisfied of the inefficacy of those means. He pointed out in an able publication to what extent you had increased, as you are doing now, the horrors of the middle passage; and he proposed, what was afterwards carried out, an expedition up the Niger. That expedition was attended with a fearful loss of life, and proved an utter failure, so far as regarded any civilising intercourse with the savage tribes of Africa. That was given up, and we are now maintaining under treaty with foreign Powers the strictest possible blockade of the coast of Africa. How far that is successful, evidence has shown; I believe it may be confidently stated that hitherto that strict blockade, maintained with the concurrence of the French and the Americans, has been ineffective in putting down the slave trade. Whether there is any chance of its succeeding, we shall know better from the report of the Committee which is now sitting on this subject; but hitherto it has not succeeded in checking the evil to any considerable extent. If, then, all the means hitherto tried have failed, and if there still be one course left open to us—that of carrying out the principle of free labour, and putting down the slave trade by successful competition—we ought to make the attempt to put down slavery by this means. That this was the true mode of doing so, I have heard, time after time, from the friends of slave emancipation. If you tell me that slavery cannot be put down by the competition of free labour, and can point out a better mode, then that is another question; but all I say is, that every means we have hitherto tried has utterly failed; and unless the object can be gained by the competition of free labour, in my opinion slavery will continue. I will now advert to the recommendation of the Committee on Sugar Planting as to the rate of duty. The Committee have recommended a protection of 10*s.* for six years to the colonies; but if the argument of the hon. Baronet (Sir J. Pakington) is good for anything, there is a difference of 15*s.* 9½*d.* between the cost of producing slave-grown sugar, and the produce of free labour. If that be true, then I apprehend that nothing short of a differential duty of 15*s.* 9½*d.* will suffice; and it will be out of the question to listen to any notion of a mere temporary protection of 10*s.* only. Indeed the whole of the argument of the hon. Gentleman opposite went to the extent of permanent protection in favour of the West India colonies. The Committee, however, do not go this length, and concur in the opinion which I have expressed against permanent protection, instead of that propounded by the hon. Member. The Committee say that ultimately the prosperity of the British colonies must depend upon their possessing the means of successfully competing with the producers of slave-grown sugar, and not upon protection. That being the case—if sooner or later the West India colonists must come into competition with slave-grown sugar—the question remains, by what means can our colonial sugar be brought into successful competition with slave-grown sugar? It is my firm opinion that this result cannot be obtained by high or lasting protection. Protection has not secured the West India proprietors against periodical seasons of distress. At various periods during the last fifty years, distress visited the proprietors, and in some cases the cultivation of many estates was abandoned in consequence. It had been distinctly shown before the Committee, that the protection enjoyed during the last few years has essentially impeded that reduction of wages on which the planters must depend for being able to compete successfully with the producer of slave-grown sugar. I am almost afraid of touching upon the subject of the management of estates in the West Indies, lest I be accused of imputing extravagance to the proprietors. I can assure the House that I have not the slightest intention of casting that imputation upon the proprietors; neither had my noble Friend on a former evening, although he was subjected to reproof on that account by the right hon. Gentleman opposite. It is in evidence, however, that there is much waste in the management of estates in the West Indies. Take the case of Mr. Tollemache. That gentleman employed persons of the highest character in the management of his estate, and there is no reason to suppose that abuses prevailed in that case which were not common to West Indian estates generally; but when Mr. Tollemache went over to the West Indies, and applied his knowledge of landed property in England to his sugar plantation, he succeeded in reducing the cost of management by 900*l.* or 1,000*l.*

a year, and he expected to be able to carry the reduction still further. Another witness, Mr. Greene, gave remarkable evidence on this point. He stated the cost of the management of two estates, the first of which was as follows: In 1843 it amounted to 2,300*l.*, in 1844 to 2,400*l.*, in 1845 to 2,200*l.*, and in 1846 to 1,600*l.* From this statement it appears that a reduction of more than a third in the cost of management was effected in the space of two years. On the second estate the reduction is stated to have been still greater; in 1843 the cost of management was 2,300*l.*, in 1844 it was 1,700*l.*, in 1845 it was 1,800*l.*, and in 1846 it was 1,300*l.* When such evidence was given by persons conversant with the management of West Indian estates, it appeared to be impossible to deny that a large needless expenditure was incurred with respect to property in those islands. The evidence which was given before the Committee on the subject of the reduction of wages, is equally strong with that relative to the management of estates. Wages have been reduced in almost every colony, and the reduction has been greatest in the old colonies. It is a remarkable fact, that distress exists not so much in what are called the old and exhausted colonies, as in those which are comparatively new, and possess a large extent of fertile land. This is the result of the high wages paid to labourers, and that again is the necessary consequence of the competition for labour amongst the proprietors caused by the high price of sugar produced by protection. The hon. Member for Leominster, in his evidence, stated distinctly that the planters bid against each other for labour, by which, consequently, the cost of production was enhanced. I, therefore, am justified in contending that by continuing protection, we should defeat the very measure on which we must depend for the prosperity of the colonies and the ultimate suppression of the slave trade. As bearing upon this point, I will take the liberty of reading an extract from a despatch written by the Governor of British Guiana. He says—

> "Had the diminution of wages taken place in 1847 rather than in 1848, many estates now jeopardised would, perhaps, have escaped; for the crops were large enough to have given profit, had expenses of labour not absorbed it."

The evidence of the hon. Member for Leominster is decisive against protection of a permanent character; for, speaking of the introduction of labour into the colonies, he says, that if it should take place under a system of permanent protection, the planter would be induced to extend his cultivation, and at the end of six or ten years he would be in the same unfortunate condition as that in which he was at present placed. The hon. Member, therefore, recommended that a protecting duty of 10*s.* should be continued for two years, and that then the scale of 1846 should be resumed. The hon. Member, it is clear, desires protection only for a short time, in order to enable the planters to reduce the wages of labour. I would not advocate a reduction of the wages of the negroes if I were not convinced that they can bear it. The concurrent testimony of the witnesses examined before the Committee, shows that the negroes are possessed of large sums of money, which they are in the habit of expending on luxuries, and even in the purchase of land, to an extent that persons in a much higher condition of life in this country cannot attain. The Governor of Guiana states that one negro in that colony had bought a farm for 5,000 dollars, and that a very limited number of other negroes have recently purchased an estate for 50,000 dollars. I request the House to attend to the following passage in the evidence of Mr. Innes:—

> "Supposing the colonies did believe that Parliament was able and willing to secure them a permanent protection of 10*s.* upon every cwt. of sugar, what do you believe would be the effect of that conviction upon the colony, upon the cultivation of estates there, and upon the rate of wages?—I believe the effect of it would be to transfer much of it into the hands of the labourers, and to defeat the endeavours of the planters to reduce wages and other charges."

Mr. Pickwood also gives some evidence worthy of consideration:—

> "Supposing we were to pass an Act to-day, increasing the protection upon sugar for the next three years, or to continue the present rate of protection for the next three years, and the news were to go out to the island of St. Kitt's, do you believe that the immediate influence upon the rise of price consequent upon the passing of that Act, would have the effect of increasing the rate of wages?—Yes; I cannot take upon myself to say how far, but I am persuaded that a great proportion of the duty would be swallowed up in that way; it would raise the rate of wages, I am certain."

It is not a little remarkable that the reduction of wages which has occurred has taken place last year for the first time, and that no efforts were made to effect that object until the differential duty was reduced to 6*s.* I say again, that if the House should take any retrograde step—if it should go back to the duty of 10s., as recommended by the Committee, it would assuredly defeat the only means by which our planters can ultimately be enabled to sustain permanent competition with the producers of slave-grown sugar. I will not follow the hon. Gentleman in his calculations respecting the relative cost of slave labour and free labour; but I may observe, that it appears from the evidence of Mr. Pickwood that at the present moment the cost of free labour in St. Kitt's is not greater than that of slave labour. This is the passage in Mr. Pickwood's evidence to which I refer:—

> "The cost of that gang of slaves, which your father considered necessary to manage the estate, was as great as you would require to pay for free labour, according to the present current rate of wages, to cultivate that estate well from one end to the other at the present time?—Yes, if you could get the labour."

It appears to me, notwithstanding the observation of the hon. Baronet behind me (Sir E. Buxton), that it is most desirable to facilitate the introduction of labourers into the West India colonies, or rather into some of them; because in Barbadoes they have more labour than they know what to do with, and in the opinion of Mr. Barkly labour actually impedes the improvement of the estates; but it is evident that a very small amount of labour introduced into the colonies will, in all probability, have the effect of keeping down the rate of wages. The hon. Member for Leominster says, in his evidence, that no enormous increase of the labouring population, but a few thousand Africans being introduced, would enable them to keep down the wages. It appears in the evidence of the hon. Member for Bristol, that a small amount of labour would answer the purpose. The possibility of the reduction has been defeated by the high price consequent upon protection. I stated, that on the first night on which this question came on, I should be prepared to take into consideration the expeose of carrying over liberated Africans. I believe it to be equally for the benefit of the colony of Sierra Leone, and of the liberated Africans, that they should be conveyed to the West Indies, and not left to remain in a state of barbarism, or perhaps be kidnapped again. This brings me to the question of immigration. Upon this point I am left completely in the dark as to what are the intentions of the two hon. Baronets who have addressed the House. I must say, that I know of no restrictions existing upon immigration, except those which are deemed necessary to prevent the revival of the African slave trade. There is no check upon immigration from China, or from any part of the African coast, which is not tainted with the slave trade. Upon this point neither the Committee nor the hon. Gentleman who has submitted the Amendment to-night, has recommended anything; all is left in the dark. As to the system of contracts to which the hon. Gentleman adverted, I believe that the right hon. Member for the University of Oxford, when in office, permitted the planters to enter into contracts with the negroes for three years. [Mr. GLADSTONE: I speak only from recollection; but I believe that my permission did not extend to contracts with natives of Africa or of the West Indies.] I was not aware that the right hon. Gentleman's permission was accompanied by such stringent restrictions. My noble Friend at the head of the Colonial Department has signified that he will not object to any reasonable regulations relative to contracts which may be sanctioned by the Colonial Assemblies. I am by no means sure, however, that the contract system would be found to work well. Mr. Tollemache says, "The contract system has been tried in Antigua, though I doubt very much whether it answers;" and I confess, I am inclined to think that it is not likely to answer, and for this reason—the object of the contracts is to compel labourers to work for a lower rate of wages than that usually received. ["No! it is to bind them to work."] My noble Friend at the head of the Colonial Department has no objection to any contracts for binding labourers to work, provided they are not treated as criminals to compel them to fulfil the terms of their contracts; but I do not believe that any system of forced labour will answer, if the labourers find that the persons working on neighbouring estates are receiving higher wages, or enjoying advantages which they do not receive. In the same way it is very difficult to enforce the law as to squatting: the fault is not in the law, but in carrying it out. It is plain enough, from the evidence taken before this Committee, that it is very much through the conduct of the managers of estates that squatting has taken place. What is the evidence of Mr. Borthwick? He says—

> "There was a competition among the planters; the proprietors of large estates, or men who could command capital, gave high wages to a few labourers on purpose to get the labour, and they

swallowed up the little estates by that means; they defeated their own purpose, because no sooner were the little estates abandoned, than the negroes became independent settlers upon those little estates."

I think one of the witnesses described such a case in the neighbourhood of Kingston, of negroes who raised vegetables largely for Kingston market, and who said they were ready to pay rent for the land, but nobody asked for rent. How it is proposed to put an end to this system, I do not know; if nobody will take measures to dispossess them, or ask for rent, I do not know what can be done. If, then, I am right, upon the concurrent evidence of the West Indian witnesses, the introduction of no great amount, but a certain amount of African immigration is essential with a view of keeping down wages; and, if so, I do think the proposal we have made of advancing money, or giving a guarantee of a loan, if they choose to raise one, is one of the best modes of proceeding. I do not say that all will avail themselves of it; but we give them the means of doing so, where the want is felt—in Jamaica, Trinidad, and Guiana; and, so far as I can gather from the most attentive consideration of the evidence, I can conceive no object for which an advance of money could be so well employed, as in the introduction of labour into those colonies where it is wanted. It will be available in those colonies in which the want is most felt. The hon. Gentleman has asked, what other means are to be taken for the relief of the planters? I fully admit that neither the introduction of labour, nor any other measure, will avail, unless we are prepared to give a protecting duty for a further time than was contemplated by the Act of 1846. We have been taunted, indeed, with departing from the principle of the Act of 1846; but I do not consider that we are doing so in the slightest degree by continuing protection for a certain time longer. The principle acted upon in 1846 was that for a certain time a certain amount of protection should be given to the West India colonies to enable them to prepare for ultimate competition with foreign sugars. It is no question of principle whether that period be four years or six; and if the experience of the last two years shows us that the period has not been long enough, and if adverse circumstances since the passing of that Act have aggravated the distress under which the West India colonies are suffering, I do not see that it is in the slightest degree inconsistent with the principles of the Act of 1846 that the period of protection should be extended. There is another fault found with the Act of 1846—and that is also referred to in the report of this Committee in the 10th resolution, namely—as to the mode of levying the duty; it is said that the Act does not in point of fact give the protection it professes to give, that various sugars are subjected to one duty, and hence the whole of our colonial muscovado sugar is exposed to the competition of the best brown clayed Havana. That is stated most clearly in the evidence of Mr. Greene; I will not trouble the House with quotations, but he states that there are differences of from 8*s*. to 9*s*. in value in the articles, and that what he wants is an actual protection, whatever the amount may be that is given, and not a nominal protection as at present, which in many cases amounts to but 1*s*. or 2*s*., and in some cases to nothing at all. We propose, therefore, to introduce a new classification into the brown sugars, and to divide those sugars of foreign growth, which at present come in under one duty, into "brown clayed," and "muscovado." We propose to continue the duty on foreign brown clayed for a year more, at its present amount of 20*s*., and then to reduce it according to the scale which is in the hands of hon. Members. Foreign muscovado we propose to leave until 1851, at the rates fixed by the Act of 1846, and then to diminish the rate gradually to 10*s*., which, after 1854, will be the duty on all brown clayed and muscovado sugar. The hon. Member has said, that in his opinion this will be defeated by foreign sugars coming in as muscovado, and not as brown. From all my inquiries I am led to believe that that will not be the case; and I do not believe that the distinction will render it worth while to take any different modes of preparing sugars. The House may be curious to see what different descriptions of sugar now come in under the same head. [The right hon. Gentleman produced two samples, and laid them on the table.] I think it must be evident from the first sight of these sugars that these are of such dissimilar quality that it will not be at all unfair to make a distinction in the duty. Of course, everything depends upon the point at which we fix the standard; and after consultation this morning with the officers of the Board of Trade and of the Customs, I may say that

I believe, without pledging myself exactly to the precise description, that the brown clayed sugar now worth 36*s*. 6*d*. in the market, long price, will be the standard of "brown clayed sugar;" and that only what is inferior to that will be admitted as foreign muscovado sugar. The officers see no difficulty whatever in carrying out that distinction. We do not propose to extend it to colonial sugar. It has always been urged that our classification was a direct discouragement to the improvement of the cultivation; at the end of six years all will come in at the same rate of duty; and we do not think it necessary to make the distinction for those few years; we propose to leave to the improved colonial sugar the advantage it now possesses. If we are right in supposing that the greater part of the foreign sugar will come in at the higher rate of duty—if, in fact, the really formidable competitor with colonial sugar is this description of foreign sugar—then we shall give a protection for a year higher than is now enjoyed by the West Indian proprietors. The recommendation of Mr. Innes is, that the fall in the present rate of differential duty should be suspended for three years; the present differential duty is 6*s*., and the proposal we make is, comparing colonial sugar with that foreign sugar which is its really formidable competitor, to give a differential duty of 7*s*. for the first of the next three years, 6*s*. 6*d*. for the second, and 6*s*. for the third. We, therefore, propose a differential duty higher than he recommends. We also propose to extend the protection, in one way or other, beyond 1851, when it would expire by the present law, and to continue it to 1854. If the present law remains unchanged, the present protection to colonial sugar is 6*s*., falling to 4*s*. 6*d*. in July, to 3*s*. in July, 1849, to 1*s*. 6*d*. in July, 1850, and expiring in July, 1851; according to the law, as we now propose it, the protection for the higher description of sugar will be 7*s*. till July, 1849, 6*s*. 6*d*. for the next year, 6*s*. for the next, then 5*s*. 6*d*., 4*s*. 6*d*., and 3*s*.; on the lower description of sugar 5*s*. 6*d*., 4*s*. 6*d*., 4*s*., 3*s*., and 2*s*.; the whole to be reduced to the same duty of 10*s*. in July, 1854. We propose also, what I believe is known to be a considerable advantage to the West Indian, though I find the Committee have made no recommendation of it, namely, the reduction of the differential duty on rum. I certainly was surprised that they made no mention of it, for it was alluded to very distinctly in the evidence. I expressed an opinion above a year ago that the duty was higher than justice required, and I have said the same thing in this Session; I did expect that the subject would be followed out by the Committee, but the whole matter is passed over in silence. I believe it is not an immaterial thing, with a view to the cost of producing sugar. And I find that the quantity very largely has increased; the rum entered for home consumption in 1846 was 2,684,000 gallons; in 1847, 3,330,000; and the increase goes on—for I find that the quantity introduced in the first four months of 1847 was 849,000 gallons, and in the first four months of 1848, 1,010,000. I believe the duty may properly be reduced to 4*d*., as we propose. This, therefore, is what we propose for the benefit of the producer of colonial sugar—to continue to him an amount of protection higher than he at present enjoys for a limited time, and to extend protection beyond the time now limited by law; we also propose a reduction of the differential duty on rum, and an advance of money for the purpose of facilitating immigration; and we shall be perfectly ready to consider any suggestion, though the Committee have made none, with a view to check vagrancy. While the measure we propose is for the interest of the colonial producer, we have not been unmindful of the interest of the consumer. If we had increased the duties on foreign produce, we should have disregarded the interests of the consumer. The interests of the colonial producer are identical with those of the consumer, because I believe that it is to the increase of consumption that the producers of sugar must look for the advancement of their own interests. I don't believe that by the course we have taken we shall exclude any foreign sugar from the market of this country for the ensuing year. With the present duty of 20*s*., foreign sugar comes freely into the country, notwithstanding the difference in favour of colonial sugar. The difference between the duties on colonial and on foreign sugar is a boon to the West Indian producer; but I don't believe that this increased protection will enhance the price of sugar for the ensuing year, or subsequently. There are considerations which I think show that such is not likely to be the case. In the first place, there is a very large stock of sugar on hand in the warehouses at this moment. Comparing this year with last year, and including the stocks of the five chief Continental ports—for when sugar is freely imported here, it is necessary to take the stocks in Continental ports—the whole quantity in stock is 143,000 tons this year, against 104,000 tons last year. There are, therefore, 40,000 tons more in stock this year, than there were last year. The accounts from the colonies and from Cuba concur in showing that there is every probability of a large produce this year. More than that, the probability is, that in the present state of the Continent, the larger part of the sugar will come to this country in the first instance. Taking the large amount of stock on hand, the anticipated result of this year's crop, and the prospect of imports, which, under other circumstances, might have taken a different direction, the probability is that a larger quantity of sugar will be brought into the market of this country than last year, and that increased supply may be expected to have the effect of preventing any enhancement of price. Maintaining the duties on the scale we propose, I believe this country has no reason to apprehend that the price of sugar will be enhanced. I have, therefore, reason to believe that the consumption will be considerably increased. It is only on increased consumption that the success of the planter depends; for production cannot be largely increased unless consumption be so. The noble Lord has stated the quantity of sugar produced last year in our colonies, and has represented it to be equal to the consumption of this country last year; and he added that it was possible the production of our colonies might equal, in another year, the consumption of this country, and even exceed it. But did he not see, that if the production of our colonies exceed the consumption of this country, they must enter into competition with foreign producers in the foreign market, and that the price which they will then receive for their sugar will depend on the price consequent on the competition of the foreign sugar. Protection would be of no advantage to them. If by the stimulus given to production in our colonies, they were induced to produce more sugar than the consumption of this country alone could take from them, they would lose all the benefit of protection, as was the case some years ago, when the colonial producers derived no benefit from protection, because, growing more than this country consumed, they were obliged to compete with foreign producers in the foreign markets, and the price they obtained was regulated by the price in the foreign markets. If the anticipations of the hon. Member were realised, their sugar will have to compete with foreign sugar in the foreign markets. If on the other hand they produced only at a high price, it is clear that the consumption even of this country would not be increased. In this way the permanent interest of the colonial producer would be injured. And the same reasons which induced the Government of the right hon. Member for Tamworth to pass the Act of 1844, and the present Government to pass the Act of 1846, would exist in full force to compel the Government to act on the principle of those measures, by introducing other sugar to keep down the price of colonial sugar. There is one other topic to which I must refer—I mean the effect on the revenue of the measure of the Government. As to what the hon. Member (Sir J. Pakington) proposes we are left in the dark; but what the hon. Member for Leominster (Mr. Barkly) proposed, the other night, was, adopting the resolutions of the Committee, to leave the duty on foreign sugar at 20*s*., and reduce the duty on colonial sugar to 10*s*. for a period of six years. If the proposal of Her Majesty's Government endangers the revenue, what would be the effect of the proposal of the Committee? The loss of 1*s*. per cwt. on colonial sugar, taking the consumption of last year at 240,000 tons, would amount on our proposal to 240,000*l*.; but the proposal of the Committee would be a loss of 4*s*. per cwt., or of 960,000*l*. on the consumption of last year. But I do not contemplate a loss under the proposal of Government. I do hope, and I think there are good grounds on which to show, that the loss involved in our proposal will be made up by increased consumption; but I am certainly not prepared for such an increase of consumption as to make up the loss which the proposal of the noble Lord's Committee would involve, namely, a loss of 960,000*l*. The loss can only be made up by an increased introduction of sugar, and by increased consumption, the duties on that increased consumption being paid into the Exchequer. The question, then, is, what is the probable increase of consumption for next year? Looking at the increased consumption of the last three or four years, I find the effect of lowering the duty has been an increase on the year 1844–45 of 36,000 tons; on 1845–46, of

19,000 tons; on 1846–47, of 28,000 tons. I don't believe there will be any great reduction in the price of sugar in 1848–49; and therefore I think it safer to look at those two years in which there was no reduction when forming an estimate of increased consumption. If I take the increased consumption for the year from the 5th of July next to the 5th of July, 1841, at 15,000 tons, the utmost loss to which I could look forward would be 45,000*l.*, supposing colonial sugar at 13*l.* per ton. If the increased consumption of 15,000 tons consisted of 10,000 tons colonial sugar, at 13*l.* per ton, and 5,000 tons foreign sugar at 20*l.* per ton, the loss would be 10,000*l.* If the increased consumption were taken at 19,000 or 20,000 tons—and after the distress of last year we may fairly anticipate a great change for the better, even if the whole increase were on colonial sugar—I should be a gainer. That would give me an increase of 20,000*l.* If the 20,000 tons of increased consumption consisted of 15,000 tons colonial and 5,000 tons foreign, the increase would be 50,000*l.* There will also be some risk of loss on the reduction of the duty on rum. The former reduction has led to a considerable increase; and I have very little doubt that an increase will take place to a considerable amount in the present instance, which will go fully to make up for the reduction. I find that within the last four months there has been at the present rate of duty an increase on rum of 160,000 gallons. An increase to an equal amount would go to make up the present reduction, which was no exorbitant increase on a consumption of 3,000,000 gallons in the course of a year. If that increased consumption takes place in sugar and rum, then I shall be no loser whatever by the present measure. I do not think there is any other point on which it is necessary for me, on the part of the Government, to offer explanations to the House. I hope that in what I have said there is nothing to show any want of sympathy for those who have suffered from the state of matters in the West Indies. But the question is, in what way the permanent interest of the colonies can best be promoted. It will be necessary for an extension of the consumption of their sugar, which can only be effected by means of an increased production, that they should obtain the means of production at a cheap cost, the cheap cost of production depending on the rate of wages. It seems to me clear to demonstration that protection has prevented the reduction of wages in our colonies, on which their facility of production depends. I shall not go further into any argument on the subject of protection generally. But they have not thereby been protected from loss in former times; and sincerely looking to the permanent interest of the colonies, and to the policy which it is the duty of this country to pursue, my conviction is that the course which the Government has proposed for the consideration of the House, whether it be regarded so far as it may be ultimately conducive to the prosperity of those colonies, or to the extinction of slavery, is the only one which promises to secure the attainment of those objects.

Mr. K. SEYMER observed, that hon. Gentlemen on that (the Opposition) side of the House had predicted all the evils which had ensued from the measure of 1846, but they were not in a position to propose a remedy. It was for the Government to do that, and they were now anxious to force upon the Government the reconsideration of the question. He thought that in a case of this kind they might fairly take the evidence of persons who were acquainted with Cuba; and it appeared from the statement of Captain Matson, who was at the Havana at the time the Bill of 1846 was passed, that the people of Cuba had previously been on the point of abolishing the slave trade, in consequence of the inconvenience they experienced from their exclusion from the British market. The largest mercantile house in the Havana had petitioned for the remission of slavery, on the ground that if slavery were prohibited, their sugar would be admitted free to the British market—the best market in the world. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had stated, that the high and extravagant wages paid in the West India colonies were attributable to the system of protection. He considered that a curious argument to be advanced by a free-trader; for he recollected the agriculturists in the west of England being taunted about the low wages they gave, and they were then told that protection had been of no use to the labourers. The colonists had been obliged to pay high wages in order to keep their estates in cultivation; and the protection they had enjoyed, though it might have enabled them to do this, had not enabled them to do more. He had always regarded this question as one of simple justice to the colonies. He conceived that the producers of sugar in our colonies had been the victims of the peculiar state of parties in the mother country, over which they had no control, and from which they ought not to have suffered. He believed the right hon. Member for Tamworth (Sir R. Peel) had all along been in favour of affording some protection to the sugar-growing colonies, and had given his vote in favour of the measure of 1846 with great reluctance. He thought that the right hon. Baronet had been influenced by the peculiar position of parties in that House—that he felt the inconvenience of defeating a Government which had just entered upon office, and therefore, on political grounds, gave his support to the Bill. If he (Mr. Seymer) was asked what course he would have taken, he would reply that he would have done justice to the colonies, and that he would have left with the Government the responsibility of throwing the country into confusion about the difference of a penny a pound in the price of sugar; and he believed that, if the subject had been fairly placed before the people of this country, as involving the question of the slave trade, they would have given a verdict in favour of the views of the right hon. Member for Tamworth, and against those of the noble Lord opposite. He (Mr. Seymer) had regarded this question as one of justice. He had no doubt that some hon. Gentleman on his own side of the House, who had supported the Bill of 1846, would recollect the opinions expressed by some of the more desponding Protectionists when the measure was adopted sanctioning free trade in corn. It was then predicted that the result of that measure would be abandoned estates and ruined proprietors—that the farmers would become labourers, and the labourers paupers. Now, the case which had been thus hypothetically put with respect to the British agriculturists, was literally true with reference to the West Indian colonists. He appealed, then, to hon. Gentlemen on that, as well as on the opposite side of the House, to retrace their steps. He would advise the free-traders not to identify free trade with the present condition of the West India colonies. Let British agriculturists ever be reduced to the state of the West India colonists, and let that state be traceable in the one case, as it was in the other, to the legislation of that House, and all their corn-law theories would not prevent the re-enactment of protection. As to the political economists, he would not appeal to them on this subject; they were incorrigible. They seemed to view with great *sang froid* the ruin of their fellow-countrymen, provided they were ruined according to rule. This country at one time encouraged both the slave trade and slavery. It eventually abolished both. The right hon. Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed to think that when the Emancipation Act was passed, the colonists were paid the full value both of their estates and of their slaves; but the slaves alone were valued at 43,000,000*l*., while the whole compensation awarded to the planters was 20,000,000*l*. He recollected that at that time the political economists said that free labour was cheaper than slave labour. He had no patience with these people; they were right in their decimal fractions, and wrong in their millions. The abandoned estates and ruined proprietary he had before mentioned were sufficient proofs of the accuracy of their anticipations. But when the Emancipation Act was passed, a promise was made to the planters that a system of apprenticeship should be continued for seven years; that they should receive assistance to promote immigration; and that protection would be afforded them by this country. Hon. Gentlemen were aware to what extent these promises had been kept. He certainly had not expected that a country which had in 1834 made such sacrifices for the abolition of slavery, would in 1846 have sanctioned a measure the tendency of which was not merely to encourage slavery, but the slave trade. He held in his hand a letter from the manager of an estate in the West Indies, who, writing on the 19th of January, stated that the labourers had not then returned to work after the Christmas holidays, but that he hoped they would return in about a week. Now, he would ask the House to consider what must be the condition of the agricultural districts of this country, if in the middle of July or the beginning of August, the agricultural labourers insisted upon having three weeks' holiday? Yet that was just the case of the West India colonies. The colonists had, in fact, been ruined by the exertions they had made. Those persons who had derived their incomes from the colonies alone were reduced to poverty, while those who possessed property in this country had been compelled to send out funds to carry on the cultivation of their estates. The machinery which used formerly to be sent out to our own colonies, was now consigned to Cuba or Brazil. The proprietors could not be expected to send out expensive steam-engines to our colonies when they could not be certain that for ten days or a fortnight at a time they would not be obliged to stand idle. The unfortunate colonists were next told that they ought to reside on their estates. He did not know that much would be gained by a person who had lived nearly all his life in this country going out to reside on his estates in the West Indies; but whether this was desirable or not, the omission of it surely formed no reason why the proprietors should be entirely ruined. The supporters of this measure laid down two great principles—first, that free labour was cheaper than slave labour; and next, that protection was the bane of commerce. Now, how did it happen that, during the existence of slavery and protection, the absentee proprietors contrived to keep their estates in good preservation, and to have good returns besides? Let hon. Gentlemen opposite explain that. The answer which he would give was, that neither of the two principles he had referred to was true. The noble Lord at the head of the Government seemed to think himself justified in being proud of his success, because he had brought forward a measure with the view of cheapening sugar, and that sugar had been cheap ever since the measure passed. During the same year that the Sugar Bill passed, a Bill was passed to encourage the manufacturer, and give cheap corn. With regard to the state of the manufacturers since that measure passed, the hon. Member for Manchester had sufficiently described them, so he would not say any more about that; but it was notorious that corn had been higher in price since that Bill passed than it had been for many years before. With regard to the Sugar Bill making sugar cheap, he begged to observe that the cheapness had been produced at the cost of tremendous sacrifices on the part of our colonists, who had been obliged to sell their sugar 20 per cent below prime cost; and the result was, that many of them had been ruined, while others were on the point of declining business. The point for the noble Lord to consider was, whether the cheap sugar would continue after the ruin of the colonist was completed. He begged to make one observation with respect to the despatches of Lord Harris. Every one who had read those despatches had been struck with the manner in which he referred to the growing disaffection of the colonists. It was a sad spectacle, he said, "to see the hearts and affections of a whole population becoming gradually alienated" from the mother country. This alienation was occasioned by the loyalty of the colonist being too severely tested. What was meant by loyalty? People were loyal because they believed that under that particular form of government they were more likely to enjoy liberty than under another form. But how could this feeling exist among the colonists after the manner in which they had been treated by the mother country? He was not surprised that in Jamaica they should have asked for "Yankee Doodle" instead of "God save the Queen." There was one part of the evidence which had not been quoted, to which he begged to refer—he meant the evidence of Senhor Cliffe, who stated that nine-tenths of the slaves imported into Brazil went to the sugar plantations, and who alleged, from what he knew of commerce generally, that "there is nothing so profitable under the sun at the present time as that trade is." How was it possible, then, to put down the slave trade so long as they took measures which tended to encourage it? It was argued by some that consistency required that we should not make such a fuss about slave labour—that we took the cotton, coffee, and tobacco of slave countries—and that therefore we must take sugar also. He begged to remind the House that when this country abolished slavery, she was satisfied with that, and did not think of interfering with the domestic policy of any other country; but with regard to the slave trade it was different. On that question we had risked going to war with our neighbours. The United States, however, so far from importing slaves from Africa, were so far protectionists that they encouraged this native branch of industry, and a horrid branch it was—the breeding of slaves for the home market. We no more encouraged the African slave trade, therefore, by taking the cotton, tobacco, and rice of America, than by taking the claret of Bordeaux and the deals of Norway. The House had been told, also, to trust to free trade putting down slavery. He believed that free trade would put down slavery when it put down war. The question before the House to consider was, what had been the effect on the slave trade and slavery of the late measure proposed by Government? He did not doubt that the intentions of Government were good; but they were not to consider the intentions, but the effects of their measure. Now, in spite of all the mystifications that had been used, it was impossible to deny that there had been a great increase, both of slavery and the slave trade, in consequence of that measure. On that ground the House ought to take its stand. He did not quite agree wish some hon. Members on the importance of cheap sugar. He thought cheap beef, cheap bread, and cheap beer, fully as important. Sugar was not like salt, a necessary and wholesome ingredient of food. If the hon. Member for Finsbury (Mr. Wakley) were present, he would allow that sugar was not so wholesome an article as was generally believed. He (Mr. Seymer) had heard that in America, in consequence of the great consumption of sugar, there was no lady aged 30 whose teeth would bear inspection. He would have preferred supporting the Amendment of the hon. Baronet (Sir J. Pakington) in the form originally introduced; but as the hon. Baronet had not thought proper to put it in that form, he should still vote for his Amendment rather than support the proposition of Government.

Mr. HUME confessed that though he was a free-trader in the fullest sense, he did not feel that he was obnoxious to the charges made against free-traders by the hon. Member who had just spoken. He agreed in much the hon. Gentleman had said as to the injustice done to our colonies, but he wished to show that free trade had nothing to do with the question. It was said the other night that free trade was got rid of, if once a differential duty were established; but he said, that free trade could only properly exist where the parties were in like circumstances, and where both parties were at liberty to apply the same means to the same end with equal facility. In corroboration of this opinion the hon. Member quoted the evidence of Mr. Deacon Hume, given before the Imports Duties Committee, of which he (Mr. Hume) was Chairman, to the effect that the British West Indies would, on equal terms, be able to compete with Cuba and Brazil. They were not, however, on equal terms, for the British West Indies were deprived of labour; and until they were placed on the same footing as Cuba and Brazil with respect to labour, it never could be said that free trade could exist. They ought not to compare this trade in sugar in the West Indies with the trade of Bradford, or of any other town in this country, because the circumstances were altogether different. In this country they had labour in abundance, but in the colonies there was not labour; and the latter had a claim upon the mother country on that account. The question therefore was, how could they restore that of which the colonies had been deprived? Of course they could not make amends to the men who had been ruined, and who were now gone; but to those who remained they were bound to do justice. The annals of legislation could not furnish such examples of injustice as had taken place in reference to the West Indies. Every Act passed by the mother country—every assurance made—every engagement entered into—had been broken. Mr. Innes, whose evidence had been referred to by the noble Lord at the head of the Government, in one part said that it was his opinion that confidence in Parliament was entirely destroyed, and that no Act could be passed which would inspire the colonies with the slightest degree of confidence. He (Mr. Hume) asserted that he knew no means by which slavery could be put down, except by making free labour cheaper than slave labour. Slavery could not exist if free labour were allowed, under proper circumstances, to be used. This was not a new opinion. It was the argument of all those who in former years advocated the emancipation of the negroes, that free labour, if it had a fair trial, would produce sugar cheaper than slave labour; and it was his complaint that that fair trial had never been given to free labour. The hon. Baronet had said that the engagement that was made to the colonies in 1834 had been fulfilled. It was no such thing. The hon. Baronet also said that the full price for the slaves was paid to the colonists. That was not so, and the reason was that the slaves were undervalued. They had been valued at 45,000,000*l.* instead of 101,000,000*l.*, which was their actual value, and not one-fourth of that value was actually paid. It was also stipulated that the apprenticeship system should continue for six years, and that the West India colonies should have exclusive possession of the home market for their produce; but in both of those respects there had been a breach of the public faith. They were now looking to this question as one of pounds, shillings, and pence; but when he spoke of the question in 1834 in that manner, he was told that it was one of humanity. At that time they had rashly and hastily made the bargain for emancipation; and what had been the consequences? [The hon. Gentleman read a circular of Lord Glenelg's, issued in October, 1845, to show that the intention of the Government, by the measure of emancipation, was to enable the colonies to supply Great Britain with sugar without being dependent on slave produce, and preserve them in prosperity.] It was the want of labour that had prevented that intention being fulfilled; and the colonists had been under such restrictions as to the importation of labour, that it amounted to a virtual prohibition. The Orders in Council, the acts of the Government, in reference to the importation of labour, were not known to Parliament or the public. They were issued secretly by the Colonial Office. Who, under those circumstances, was to blame? Was it fair to complain that the West Indians, who probably resided in this country, carried on their estates at great expense, when they were prevented from obtaining the means of managing them? But he thought that, from the evidence before the Committee, some of the best cultivated estates in the West Indies were those that belonged to proprietors in Europe; and if sufficient labour were supplied, he was satisfied they would have been carried on well. But a series of violations of engagements, and the improper proceedings of the Colonial Office, had prevented it. That office was, in fact, a nuisance. Better would it have been for the fortunes of this country and of the West Indies had the Colonial Office been locked up. If they had allowed the colonies to manage their own affairs, there would not have been such distress. They could not even pass any fiscal regulations without the petty interference of the Colonial Office. They must prevent the interference of ignorant men. What could Lord Grey or Mr. Hawes know about the colonies? He gave them credit for being clearheaded and sharp men; but could they intuitively know what was necessary for the internal management of any colonies as well as those who were residing there? Amongst the various grounds upon which the colonists might rest their complaints was this, that for two months at a time they did not know what to expect—the colonists had been ruined by the measures of successive Governments. Lord Harris very truly stated some of the evils which arose from the interference of the Colonial Office at home with the business of colonies respecting which they knew nothing. It appeared from the statements of Lord Harris that Major Fagan laid down excellent rules and regulations for the government of the Coolies; that those regulations had been considered in council by Lord Harris, and fully approved; that they had been found to work well; that those regulations kept the Coolies on the estates well fed and well clothed. No doubt there might have been some faults in them, for they had been drawn up at a short notice, but under them the Coolies were healthy and comfortable. Lord Grey, however, took upon himself to cancel those regulations, and to substitute a code of his own, or rather, as he believed, the noble Earl caused, in a great degree, the old regulations, to be readopted. What ensued? The Coolies acquired wandering habits; they went into the woods, where many of them were lost; and nothing was now more common than to find the skeletons of Coolies, whose deaths might fairly be imputed to the influence of those regulations. The hon. Member for Coventry had very truly said, that the ignorance of those who governed our colonies was much to be deplored; that in instances innumerable they had betrayed that ignorance; and he himself could lay before the House various authorities to prove the ignorance and incapacity of those who ruled the colonies. The colonists had an unquestionable right to a good supply of labour; but difficulties were always thrown in their way by the Colonial Office—down to the present hour all imaginable difficulties were thrown by the Colonial Office in the way of emigration. It was said, that the cause of the existing evils in the colonies was competition amongst the colonists; to that the answer was obvious—give them a sufficiency of labour, and competition would immediately abate. What was the real state of things in the colonies? The negroes were the masters, and those who had been masters were now servants. The negroes went to the little work that they did in carts, and carried silk umbrellas. What satisfaction was it to the colonists to be told in that House by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the Government did all for them that it possibly could with regard to labour? The fact was, that the Government did nothing. Not that Lord Grey was any worse than his predecessors—they were all alike—and the colonies were reduced to a state almost of destitution. The want of labour became most apparent in the year 1838, and from that time till 1846 it went on increasing. For his part he could not understand why the Government did not allow the colonists to go to the coast of Africa, and there negotiate by treaty with the native chiefs for a supply of labour; the chance ought to be given them, for they had been exposed to a severe trial, and compelled to endure the consequences of a great experiment. Was it not, then, the duty of a paternal Government to give them the means of restoring credit and confidence? Surely, means could be devised for that purpose. As to the Government plan, it had nothing to recommend it; the colonists had much better remain as they were, and be allowed to die quickly. He would say, give them sufficient protection; yes, he would call it protection. Give them a fair chance to restore credit and confidence, and they would continue to supply this country as they had ever done. He believed that nothing less than a period of ten years' trial would do any good to the colonies. Let not that be thought too long; the House had passed fourteen years without doing anything, and now the colonies were in a state of destitution, and almost of despair. If Government would withdraw their squadron from the coast of Africa, and apply one-fourth of the money wasted there towards the West Indies, they would be before many years in a flourishing state. Hitherto Parliament had broken every engagement it had made with these colonies; let them now make one and keep it. If nothing were done to prevent the present downward state of the West Indian colonies, in a few years very few Europeans would be left there; they would be left to the negroes, and if they escaped a St. Domingo and maintained peace, it would be as much as could be expected. The existing condition of affairs was a sad disappointment to all who looked upon the great experiment of negro emancipation as one worthy of this country. If Parliament would now give the colonies a long term, if they would enact vagrant laws, enforce continuous labour, allow the colonies to form their own estimates, and make one comprehensive scheme for them, the House might even now rely on success. He felt compelled to oppose the plan of the Government. He trusted the Motion of the hon. Baronet (Sir J. Pakington) would be carried, and that the hon. Baronet would then be prepared to submit to the House a plan upon which they might decide fairly, for there was no other way of doing honour to themselves or good to the colonies.

Debate adjourned to Thursday.

House adjourned at a quarter to One o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, June 20, 1848.

MINUTES.] PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Barron, from Members of the Chamber of Commerce of the City of Waterford, and by Mr. Bouverie, from Merchants, Bankers, and Others, of Glasgow, against a Repeal of the Navigation Laws.—By Mr. Fergus, from Members of the Kirkaldy Presbytery (Scotland), against Additional Endowment of the Parochial Schools (Scotland).—By Sir W. Somerville, from the Board of Guardians of the Poor for the South Dublin Union, for an Alteration of the Poor Law (Ireland).—By Viscount Ebrington, from several Working People of Mile End, in favour of the Public Health Bill.—By Mr. Greenall, from Pawnbrokers, and Others, of Warrington, Lancashire, in favour of the Remedies against the Hundred Bill.—By Mr. Fergus, from the Moderator and Members of the Presbytery of St. Andrews, against the Registering Births, &c. (Scotland) Bill (1847); and Marriage (Scotland) Bill (1847).—By Mr. John Evans, from Members of the Haverfordwest Literary and Scientific Institution for Alteration of the Scientific Societies Bill.—From Freeholders of the County of Essex, complaining of the Inclosure of Waltham Forest.—By Mr. Bright, Mr. Anderson, and several other Hon. Members, from an Immense Number of Places, in Favour of an Extension of the Elective Franchise.—By Mr. Gladstone, from the Deanery of Chesterfield, and its Neighbourhood, for an Alteration of the Law respecting Bishops.—By Mr. Cobden, from the Village of Fulstow (Lincoln), and several other Places, in favour of a Better Observance of the Lord's Day.—By Mr. Fox Maule, from Bannockburn, and its Vicinity, in favour of the Places of Worship Sites (Scotland) Bill.—By Mr. Hume, from the Committee of the West London Anti-Enclosure Association, for Retrenchment of the Expenditure.—By Lord George Bentinck, from Agents of the West India Colonies, against the Proposed Measures respecting the Sugar Duties.—By Mr. George Thompson, from the Congregation of the Primitive Methodists of St. Ives, Cornwall, in favour of a Reduction of the Duties on Tea, Coffee, Sugar, and Cocoa.—By Mr. Wakley, from Thomas Cattell, M.D., Bramston (Northampton), for Inquiry respecting Arsenic.—By Sir Edward Buxton, from Havering-atte-Bower (Essex), against the Diplomatic Relations, Court of Rome, Bill.—By Lord Ashley, from a Number of Artisans and Mechanics of London, praying for Remedial Measures in their Distress.—From Henry Karslake, of No. 4, Regent Street, in the Parish of St. James's, Westminster, for Production of certain Evidence on a Trial respecting the Great Eastern and Western Railway Bill (1846).—By Mr. Sharman Crawford, from Tenant Farmers, and Others, resident in the Larne Poor Law Union, against the Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Bill.—By Mr. Wakley, from Members of the Port Philip Medical Association, in favour of an Extension of the Medical Registration and Medical Law Amendment Bill to the Colonies.—By Mr. Labouchere, from Admiral Sir Edward Codrington, G.C.B., respecting the Merchant Seamen's Fund as regards Seamen Shipwrecked in the Colonies.—By Mr. Cobden, from Trustees for Improving the Town of Halifax, against, and by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, from the Clergy, Magistrates, and Others, of the same Place, in favour of, the Public Health Bill.—By Mr. Wakley, from the Guardians of the Poor of the Radford Union (Lincoln), in favour of an Alteration of the Law of Rating and Settlement.—By Sir F. Thesiger, from George Hetherington, of Essex Court, Temple, Parliamentary Agent, respecting the Warwickshire, and London Railway (Worcester and Weedon Line) Bill, 1846.

DECIMAL COINAGE.

DR. BOWRING asked the Master of Mint whether any progress had been made in the decimal coinage? He wished to know when there would be an issue of the tenth of a pound piece?

Mr. SHEIL admitted that there had been some delay connected with the coinage to which the hon. Gentleman referred. There was a Commission sitting at present, and till that Commission reported, it would be difficult to proceed, or to enter into any arrangement with the company called "Moneyers." So long ago as 1817, a contract was entered into with the Moneyers, by which a certain sum was paid to them; and if a new coinage was issued, it would be necessary to form with them a new contract. Till the present Commission reported, however, that contract could not be entered into.

ENGLISH WORKMEN EXPELLED FROM FRANCE.

Mr. B. COCHRANE had to ask whether those workmen who had been turned out of France had received any compensation for the losses they had sustained by the seizure of the sums they had lodged in the French savings-banks? If they had not, had the noble Lord any objection to lay on the table the correspondence that had passed between him and the British Ambassador at Paris on the subject?

Viscount PALMERSTON had to state, in reply to the question of the hon. Gentleman, that communications had passed some time ago between Lord Normanby and the French Government on this subject; and the French Government promised that the deposits belonging to English workmen should, if possible, be restored to them in full, though a different arrangement had been made with regard to French depositors. In these circumstances, the House would agree with him that it would be unnecessary to produce any correspondence till the result became known.

NATIONAL REPRESENTATION.

Mr. HUME rose to bring forward the Motion of which he had given notice, namely—

> "That this House, as at present constituted, does not fairly represent the population, the property, or the industry of the Country, whence has arisen great and increasing discontent in the minds of a large portion of the People; and it is therefore expedient, with a view to amend the National Representation, that the Elective Franchise shall be so extended as to include all Householders—that votes shall be taken by Ballot—that the duration of Parliaments shall not exceed three years—and that the apportionment of Members to Population shall be made more equal."

He hoped that, after the exhibition which had taken place on that and the previous day (alluding to the numerous petitions that had been presented), it would now be admitted that there was some interest taken by the country in this question. He could assure the House that no arrangement had been made to get up these petitions by any party connected with the Committee to which he belonged. There had been no organisation whatever. He considered that the assertion of the noble Lord in the short speech he made on this subject on a late occasion, had been completely answered by the numerous petitions which had since then been presented. He confessed they had realised to a great degree the expectations which he entertained when he undertook to submit this question to the House. He could assure the noble Lord and the House that it was not without the greatest reluctance that he had undertaken to bring forward a question of so much importance at a time when the public business of the House was so pressing; but it was well known to his hon. Friends about him that it was at their suggestion, and not his, that the meeting was called at which it was determined to bring forward this Motion, with the view of preventing the evils with which the country seemed to be threatened, and of attracting the attention of the community from opinions which seemed to threaten the public peace. He thought it necessary to state, also, that although he had been requested by various bodies of Reformers before the 10th April to bring forward a Motion of this kind, it was not till after that period that he and his Friends agreed to consider whether they could prevent, by any means in their power, the recurrence of such scenes as had taken place on that day. It would be recollected that the public peace of the country was then threatened, and that undoubtedly great alarm was felt—much more, he believed, than there was any occasion for. We had seen nowhere else such a readiness on the part of every class, from the highest to the lowest, to come forward in the support of public order. Nothing was more important to the peace and prosperity of any country than the principle of maintaining the authority of the magistracy, and rendering the civil power paramount; and he believed that it was not necessary to have employed a single soldier in this metropolis, so complete, so general, and so hearty had been the demonstration on the part of the civil power. It was highly to the credit of the Government, and upon that ground he thought the House ought to bear with him in what he was about to submit to them. They ought to take into their serious consideration what it was that caused the alarm on the 10th of April—what it was that had led to the breaches of the peace that had taken place in different parts of the country in the last eight or ten years, and then consider whether the Radical Reformers, who were improperly called Chartists, had any just ground of complaint. It was for the House to consider when they saw matters brought to such a crisis as occurred on the 10th of April, whether the persons who manifested such a determination to obtain an extension of the suffrage and a reform of Parliament, should become participators with those who ruled the destinies of the country—whether those classes who were extending through the whole mass of the community, and who were more numerous than those who enjoyed the privilege of electing Members of Parliament, had just cause of complaint; and, if they had, whether it was not the duty of the House as speedily as possible to correct the abuses that existed. We were not in the condition this year that we had been in for the last three or four years. Events had taken place that had altogether altered the condition and situation of the working and other classes in this country. We stood prominent in Europe as a country with a more constitutional Government than any other. We boasted that that House represented the people at large. We boasted that through the agency of Parliament we could obtain all that might be necessary for the peace and welfare of the country, without having recourse to military power. We stood distinguished from the different Governments of Europe in that respect, for almost all of them had been under military government or a military despot, and depended upon a large army for their support and maintenance. But we had fondly considered ourselves a civil nation—our institutions had been supported without military aid—and, as he had heard it said, our military power was wanted more to maintain our colonial possessions abroad than for any purposes at home. Not that he was one of those who thought that there ought not to be a proper military establishment in every country, to maintain its power in case of need; and he considered that a division of labour carried into effect in this case, by having some men to do exclusively the duties of soldiers, was of great importance; but he must contend that we had more than a proper establishment. We had become a military nation, and had of late years lost the character which had formerly been our boast. The discontent that existed in the country was general. It was time they should consider whether there was any ground for it, and, if there was, they should immediately take measures to remove it and give the people the enjoyment of tranquillity and order. It was for that reason he had felt it to be his duty to submit to the House what he thought would be a remedy for the evils that existed. In the first place, he contended that, whilst the Reform Bill of 1832 had failed to answer all the purposes which, as an ardent and zealous supporter of reform, he had anticipated, yet he should be acting most unfairly if he said that the reform effected by that measure had not done much to secure the peace of this country. He believed that if we had had no such reform up to this day, and the discontent that existed then had continued, more fearful evils would have arisen. But it was because that measure had not effected all the objects for which he had struggled at the time, and which the country, from one end to the other, had interested itself to obtain, that now, after sixteen years had passed away, and they had had ample opportunities of judging how far that measure had answered the purposes for which it was intended, that he brought the subject before the House. In order to explain to the House the view he entertained of what it was the duty of Parliament to do, he would simply state that Parliament was a mere engine by which a constitutional country was to be governed, and which, according to our constitution, purported to attend to the interests of all classes upon all occasions. He wanted, then, to know whether that was the case now, or whether a large portion of the community, most important in numbers and interests, was not exempted from their share of representation in that House? He thought that the constitution gave to every man in the country his share in the representation. Taxation and representation should go together, and those who did not assist in the election of Members who were to sit in that House, and pass laws affecting their liberties and property, were, in fact, deprived of their rights. They were not, in fact, in that condition which distinguished freemen from slaves. The only difference he knew was this—that the slave had a master to make laws for him and to direct him; whilst the freeman ought to have a voice in the constitution, and to assist in the election of those who were to be his representatives and take care of his interests. Was that the case now? And if it were not, if the House did not represent all classes alike, some classes must be injured, and they were now discontented because they were excluded from the pale of the constitution, and placed in a situation where they were obliged to suffer and undergo whatever laws might be passed affecting them, without as freemen having any voice in the election of those who made such laws. If, then, Parliament did not represent all classes, it became a bad engine—an engine in the hands of the few, who had power as against the many; and it might be better, if we were not to have a good Parliament, to have no Parliament at all. In other nations they might have no occasion for a Parliament; a military power, the will of a governor, of a despot, might be sufficient; but it was because he had seen the evils arising from such a system, and the ruin which within the last few months had resulted from it—because he had seen the dreadful risk of driving to desperation men who were entitled in reality to a share in the constitution—that he was desirous to have the political power of Parliament founded on the broadest possible basis. The Crown being the chief magistrate for the conduct of affairs, the Government existed, not for the good of the Crown, the nobility, or any particular class, but for the good of the community at large, of the King, Lords, and Commons, as the best means of carrying on the affairs of the country under the authority of Parliament. No act of the Crown or of the Ministers could or ought to be valid, but by the vote and voice of the House of Commons. They ought, therefore, to invest the House of Commons with the highest possible authority and interest in the country; and to do that they should give to great numbers of their fellow-countrymen the right of suffrage to elect those who were to exercise such important functions. He would ask hon. Members, could they in their conscience say that justice was done, seeing that large classes were unrepresented? Five out of every six male adults in this country were without any voice in the election of the representatives to that House. Out of the 5,000,000 or 6,000,000 male adults above twenty-one, which there were in this country, taking the average, some individuals being registered for more than three, four, or five different places, the number of registered electors did not amount to more than from 800,000 or 850,000. All the remainder then of the 5,000,000 or 6,000,000 adults who had not that privilege, were placed in an inferior situation, and deprived of that right which by the constitution they were entitled to enjoy; he said right—it was not a favour—they had a right to it. Every man born in this country owed an allegiance to the Throne, obedience to the laws, and that which was necessary to maintain order and peace; but in return for that he was to have protection to his person and property, and a share in all those civil rights which, as an Englishman, the constitution gave him. At eighteen, or, he believed, at sixteen, an Englishman might be draughted for the militia; he might be taken in the streets and called upon by the civil authorities to join the magistracy in quelling riots and maintaining peace. The Constables' Act, passed two years ago, gave power to call on every one under penalties to aid the civil authorities in preserving the public peace. He might be drawn for the militia, or taken for the Navy by impressment, for that was not yet abolished—he wished it was; he might be dragged from his home and family and all that was near and dear to him, when the services of the State required it, and in return for those services was it too much for him to ask that he might be placed in possession of that right which the constitution gave him? He (Mr. Hume) was not speaking of natural rights, which was a phrase no one understood, but of constitutional rights—of those rights which our constitution, according to the best authorities, had given to every Englishman, and he said it was not just for Parliament to shut the door, and to say that that class of unrepresented men, many of whom were of superior talents to those who sat in that House, should remain excluded from their share in the election of their representatives. He might say that the best instructed workmen ever known—famous throughout the world for their ingenuity, industry, and ability—were excluded from all share of the representation, and were herded together as unworthy of being considered Englishmen, although they had added to the glory of the country as soldiers, and to its value as artisans. Was not that a legitimate ground for discontent? He therefore asked the House to give him a reason why every man in that situation should not be represented? and he asked those who shut the doors and kept out a person of that class to give him a hearing. It was a matter for serious consideration whether they were not blindly going on creating discontent, by allowing one portion of the people to be admitted to the representation, but keeping the other out; and to those who were the friends of peace and order, it was a serious matter that they should propose a remedy, not, indeed, by conceding a favour, but by giving a right which had been withheld. He asked the House to consider what passed at Manchester on the evening of the 10th of April, after the special constables had performed their duty. They met, and what was their statement?—

> "We met to-day to prevent any outbreak against the peace by the Chartists. And what are they discontented about? Why are they desirous to break the peace? The answer was, 'They want to have a reform in Parliament; they consider they have a right, as Englishmen, to have a vote for those who make laws affecting their lives and property. They consider that those laws place them under contributions for taxation, and that they ought to have a voice in the representation.' The question was then asked, 'Are you contented with the House of Commons as it is?' and the answer was, 'No.'"

But the remedy for that discontent was to give them the situation the constitution assigned to them, and there would be no occasion for alarm. The aristocracy had a greater stake, apparently, than humbler individuals, and therefore peace and order were of greater importance to them in every point of view. To the Governors of the State, also, it was of primary importance that every cause that could produce discontent should be removed, because no dissatisfaction, no dread of a breach of public order, could take place without the disorganisation and disturbance of those habits of industry and commerce upon which the prosperity of this country depended. It was therefore incumbent upon the Ministers, from the oath they had taken to their Sovereign, to give their best counsel and assistance for maintaining peace, as well as it was the duty of that House to carry out such amendments in the law as were required for that purpose. It was important he should show what were the opinions which were entertained by many as to the right of voting. Various opinions had existed on that point, and the Reform Bill had placed it on no fixed or intelligible principle. Now, in introducing the Reform Bill on the 3rd of October, 1831, Lord Grey, speaking of the great importance at that time of quieting the public mind, and removing the discontent that existed, and speaking also of the rights of those whose interests he was then advocating, used these words:—

> "I believe the present Bill to be a measure of conciliation; I believe that on its acceptance or rejection depends, on the one hand, tranquillity, prosperity, and concord; on the other, the continuance of a state of political discontent. And again, I believe that a change is necessary to infuse new vigour into the constitution, and to unite the estates of the realm in the bonds of a sacred and happy union, to make the House of Commons that which it was intended to be, and professed to be, and ought to be—a full, vigorous, and efficient representative of the people of England."

That was the language of Earl Grey, who, from his earliest years, was a Reformer—who had witnessed the evils of rejecting the Reform Bill in 1793—and who bore testimony against the Government for that rejection. But if that noble Lord expressed himself in such language as he (Mr. Hume) had just quoted, ought not those who were his successors, and who were in office with him at that time, even if their own declarations were forgotten, to remember that statement, and let it sink deep into their minds with reference to the present time? But Lord Grey stated elsewhere that he considered it to be the right of every person to be represented, and in his speech he quoted the authority of Mr. Serjeant Glanville, who said—

> "There being no certain custom nor prescription who should be electors, and who not, we must have recourse to common right, which, to this purpose, was held to be, that more than the freeholders only ought to have voices in the election, viz., all men inhabitant householders resident within the borough."

In the resolutions on the Cirencester case, 1792, would be found a complete legal and Parliamentary definition of a householder:—

> "A general definition for purposes of enactment as to right of voting might be in some such terms as these:—'Every male person of full age, and not subject to any legal incapacity, who shall occupy any house or dwelling, the same being *bonâ fide* fitted for, and applied to, purposes of residence, shall, if duly registered, be entitled to vote in the election of a Member or Members to serve in Parliament for such, &c. Provided always that no such person be registered, unless such person shall have, &c.' (The restriction or qualification superadded as to time of residence, length of occupancy, &c., must of course be according to the view taken of the enlargement or restriction of the right.")

The Parliamentary Committee, in the case of the borough of Pontefract, came to the resolution :—

> "Household suffrage in the borough of Pontefract was, that any person who had lived in town six months previous to an election, keeping house, was entitled to a vote. Rates and taxes formed no objection. 'Householders resident' was the distinguishing term. Non-payment of rates and taxes would not disqualify the voter."

What was the great demand out of doors but for such a decision of the House of Commons as was come to by the Committee in the case of the Pontefract election? What was the opinion of Sir Thomas Smith, which was quoted as of great importance at the time of the Reform Bill? Sir Thomas Smith, who spoke in the time of Queen Elizabeth, said—

> "Every Englishman is intended to be present in Parliament, either in person or by procuration and attorney, of what pre-eminence, state, dignity, or quality soever he be, from the prince to the lowest person of England. And the consent of the Parliament is taken to be every man's consent."

But how could it be said that the consent of Parliament was "every man's consent," when five out of six men had no vote? He was asking for these rights, not as a matter of favour, but as a matter of right; and so in former times they were held to be. In 1837, Lord Brougham brought in a Bill for the appointment of a School Committee of five persons; and on the 14th Clause of that Bill, the noble and learned Lord proposed an education suffrage in the following terms :—

> "All persons rated to the relief of the poor for any property in the parish or township, all owners of property rated in the parish, and all persons who have been resident within the same for twelve months before the meeting, and have received certificates of such residence, or who, being so resident for twelve months, have at any time received certain certificates of education hereinafter named."

The late Earl Grey, during the Reform discussions in 1832, quoted the opinion of Whitelock on the suffrage, whom he stated to be one of the best authorities he could quote upon a constitutional question. Whitelock said in his work on Government :—

> "Whenever any question about elections was brought before the House, the inclination of the House of Commons always was to favour popular elections, observing that the more free they were, the more they were for the interests of the community. At this day, in many boroughs the election still remains popular, being exercised by all the inhabitants, except almsmen and such like."

The practice of scot and lot voting was an old and ancient practice, which continued until, he would admit, it became an encroachment upon the rights of the people at large. But up to the present hour, the great number of non-represented were deprived of that which the rules of the constitution fairly gave them. The Society of the Friends of the People, on the 30th of May, 1795, Mr. W. Smith in the chair, came to the following resolution :—

> "That it is undoubtedly desirable, for many reasons, that the collective body of qualified electors shall be as numerous as possible. To reach the numbers by whom the power ought to be exercised it must be distributed equally and impartially over the whole surface of the kingdom. What we want is a free House of Commons, and a real representation. Any measure of reform which does not really give and effectually secure hat object, is more than unprofitable, and the efforts to obtain it worse than thrown away."

The Hampden Club, in 1814, published a resolution that every adult male who paid his taxes had a right to vote for Members of Parliament. This resolution required the payment of taxes as a condition of voting, which was more than the others did. He begged the House to consider whether, when they excluded so many of their fellow-countrymen from the right of suffrage, they were not themselves the aggressors, and whether they did not themselves thereby drive the unrepresented classes to acts of insubordination and breaches of public order. He called upon the House to say whether they would not consider how to remove that discontent, and make the basis of the public institutions of this country as wide as possible. They were, in his opinion, more likely to strengthen the foundations of the throne of this country, and of such of their institutions as were worth preserving—for some of their institutions were not worth preserving—by removing the cause and occasion of that popular discontent which had changed the face of Europe. What, he would ask, was the actual state of the representation of this country? He had prepared now, as on a former occasion, a number of tables to show the actual state of the representation in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. The gross population of Great Britain in 1841 was 18,500,000. The number of electors in Great Britain for 1846 was 944,473. The number of males above twenty years of age was about 4,000,000, of whom, deducting duplicate entries, not more than 850,000 were *bonâ fide* electors. Could they expect to maintain peace and order under such a system? The inequality was so great and so monstrous, that common sense was shocked at the idea of calling that a fair representation. He would take three English counties — Huntingdon, Rutland, and Westmoreland—which returned two Members each, being six Members in all elected for these counties. The males above twenty years of age in those counties were about 26,400; the registered electors were 9,000, and they returned six Members. He would now take the three counties of Middlesex, South Lancashire, and West Yorkshire, which also returned six Members. Here the male adults, instead of being 26,000, were 316,000, and the number of registered electors was about 73,000. This male adult population of 316,000 persons was met by the voice of Huntingdon, Rutland, and Westmoreland, for which counties six Members were nevertheless also returned. He might take also the case of the Tower Hamlets, with a population of 400,000, which had no greater voice in that House than Harwich, with a population of 3,700; both boroughs returned two Members. Did it not tarnish the character and reputation of the House that so much gross inequality and injustice existed? and were not the interests of the many in great danger of being sacrified, under such a system, to the interests of the few? The six boroughs of Harwich, Thetford, Chippenham, Totness, Huntingdon, and Knaresborough, returned twelve Members. The gross population of the six boroughs was 28,000. They sent, as he had said, twelve Members, and their influence in the representation was as great as that of Westminster, the Tower Hamlets, Liverpool, Finsbury, Marylebone, and Manchester, with 94,000 electors, and a population of 1,500,000; and yet the voice of those 1,500,000 persons, who returned only twelve Members, was equalled by that of those small and paltry boroughs. In the large constituencies, too, something like public spirit and fair voting existed; but these small boroughs were open to corruption and undue influence, of which the House had seen so many instances during the present Session; and thus, against the twelve Members representing the important and independent constituencies he had mentioned, there were twelve Members returned for these small boroughs, who frequently represented either their own pockets or the large landed proprietors of the neighbourhood. He would now take three constituencies in Scotland, Banffshire, Peebles-shire, and Selkirkshire, having 2,173 registered electors, and 12,330 adult males; and he would compare these counties with Edinburghshire, Lancashire, and Aberdeen, where the electors were 9,560, and the male adult population 171,000. Was that fair, and ought such a state of things to be allowed? He could point out throughout their representative system the same gross inconsistency. He held in his hand an extract from a speech of his late friend, Daniel O'Connell, one of the last speeches which he made in that House. Mr. O'Connell contrasted the representation of Ireland with that of England, and complained of the miserable deficiency of electors in Ireland, compared with some districts in England. Mr. O'Connell showed that Rutland, with less than 20,000 inhabitants, had more electors than two Irish counties, ranging between 70,000 and 100,000, than two more ranging between 100,000 and 140,000 than two more with upwards of 150,000, than one more with more than 250,000; and, lastly, than another with more than 300,000. He then took the county of Londonderry, and compared it with Westmoreland. The population of Westmoreland was 42,464; the number of its electors 4,392. The population of Londonderry county was 207,848, and the number of electors 2,172. Thus Londonderry had an excess of 165,384 of population, while Westmoreland had an excess of 2,220 of electors. Mr. O'Connell next compared Downshire with Westmoreland in the same manner, and showed that, with a population six to one greater than that of Westmoreland, the latter county had 1,260 more electors than Downshire. He then took the counties of Galway and Cork, and compared them with Westmoreland, where the disproportion was much greater. All these inequalities ought to compel the House to do justice to the unrepresented, seeing that peace, contentment, and public order would arise from equalising the civil rights of the country. Mr. O'Connell gave two examples of Irish boroughs. He took Lisburn, Portarlington, Tralee, Dungannon, Enniskillen, and Kinsale, six boroughs, having a population of 1,097 electors, and returning six Members, while three other Irish boroughs, Cork, Dublin city, and Limerick, with 14,540 electors, only returned the same number of representatives. In the six small boroughs one Member was returned for 183 electors, while in the large constituencies there was only one Member to 2,423 electors. These instances proved that there was nothing of that counterpoise and equality either in England or Ireland which ought to exist. He had received a letter that morning from Rochester, in which the writer said—

> "Your notice to bring before the House of Commons a Motion for a reform in Parliament, has met with my entire concurrence, from the conviction that the people are not fairly represented. Being a Kentish man, I will take for example the county in which I reside. Greenwich and Deptford return two Members; but Woolwich, a town nearly as populous as the aforesaid two places put together, has no representative. Gravesend, now a very populous place, has no Member, although Rochester, but a few miles distant, returns two, with a less population than Gravesend. Tonbridge and Tonbridge-wells, having a population of several thousands, likewise have no representative; neither has Faversham, Ashford, Tenterden, Cranbrook, nor Sevenoaks, although they are all places very numerously inhabited."

He had prepared several other tables to show the disproportion in the representation, and he called on the House to equalise the distribution of the electors when so arranged. If the hon. Members would take his advice, they would consult a pamphlet by Mr. Alexander Mackay, being an analysis of the present state of the representation. He (Mr. Hume) had prepared his own analysis; but Mr. Mackay's was so much more correct, so much more accurate, that he would refer hon. Members to it, as giving an analysis of the present state of the representation throughout the country in the most complete manner possible. And what did that analysis show? Mr. Mackay, to prove how unequally different interests and populations were balanced in the House of Commons, took 22 boroughs, the aggregate population of which was but a fraction above 100,000, and found that they had 42 representatives in the House of Commons, that is to say, one Member for every 2,390 persons; while 20 other cities and boroughs, with an aggregate population of 3,780,000, also returned 42 Members, being one Member for about every 90,000 persons. How was it possible to guard against abuses when they found these small boroughs thus counterbalancing the comparative population of the large cities? The noble Lord (Lord J. Russell), when he introduced the Reform Bill, pledged himself that every borough should have at least 300 electors at first, and that the number should be, if possible, from time to time increased. But—

> "Of the cities and boroughs now sending two representatives each to Parliament, there are 15 with a population of upwards of 150,000; 16 of from 50,000 to 100,000; 27 of from 20,000 to 50,000; 23 of from 10,000 to 20,000; 47 of under 10,000. Of those returning one Member, there are 3 with a population of from 50,000 to 100,000; 19 of from 20,000 to 50,000; 33 of from 10,000 to 20,000; 30 under 10,000. Of those with a population under 10,000, 32 have only 5,000 and under; and of these, 1 of which falls to below 2,000, no less than 20 return two Members to Parliament."

He would say that it was not possible for any man to rise from a perusal of this analysis without being satisfied that the time for a change had come. It appeared that one county Member in England represented 3,290 electors, while a county Member in Wales represented 2,700; in Scotland, 1,633, and in Ireland 1,078 electors. The irregularity in boroughs was as great. In England one Member represented 1,045 electors; in Wales 785; in Scotland 1,260; and in Ireland 1,684. Now, he did not mean to say that mathematical accuracy could be obtained in these proportions, but still there ought to be something like an equality. The population would increase in some places and decrease in others; and they saw in other countries an adjustment of the representative system to the increase or decrease of the population, on the principle that Parliament should really represent the people. The last quotation he would trouble the House with was the following:—

> "The metropolis, including all its Parliamentary districts, with a population of 2,000,000, is represented by sixteen Members in Parliament. The eight boroughs of Bridgenorth, Honiton, Harwich, Thetford, Richmond (Yorkshire), Totness, Stafford, and Lymington, with an aggregate population falling short of 40,000, return the same number of Members. Thus we have one group of Members, sixteen in number, representing 2,000,000 of people, and more property than is accumulated on any other spot, of equal dimensions, on the globe; and another group, consisting of the same number, representing less than 40,000 people, with but petty interests at stake, and all of them, so far as the franchise is concerned, under local influence."

Thus the whole influence of the metropolis was neutralised by the Members for these eight boroughs coming into the House in the manner to which he had already alluded. The representation of the country was, in fact, based upon no fixed principle. Some hon. Members might be surprised to hear that, although the 10*l.* suffrage was the standard for boroughs, and the 40*s.* freehold the standard for counties, there were, in truth, no fewer than eighty-five different kinds of suffrage. It was scarcely possible to appreciate the confusion, the delay, and the expense that such a system produced. What the House ought to do was, to render the suffrage as simple, as general, as easily obtained, and as easily defended as possible. Yet the very reverse was the state of things at present. The suffrage was complicated, difficult to be obtained, difficult to be preserved, and attended with great expenditure, not only of money but of time. He should therefore counsel the House to adopt an uniform system of suffrage, one for the counties and one for the boroughs. Before proceeding to that part of the subject, however, he begged the particular attention of the House to the various kinds of suffrage now existing. He had before him an analysis of them, made by an able barrister, who had made the subject his study, and, without wearying the House by commenting upon them, he wished hon. Members to note their numbers and intricacy. He would not enumerate all these distinctions, but merely quote a few of them. There was the freehold qualification arising out of an "estate in fee of the yearly value of 40*s*." Then came "estate for life before the passing of the Reform Act." Then an "estate for lives before the passing of the Reform Act." Next, "having in actual occupation an estate for life or lives of the yearly value of 40*s*. after the passing of the Reform Act." Then came the acquiring an estate for life or lives of the yearly value of 40*s*. by "marriage settlement," "devise," "promotion to a benefice," "promotion to an office," "seized of an estate for life of the yearly value of 10*l*. and upwards," "seized of an eatate for lives of the yearly value of 10*l*." Then came "joint tenants," "tenants in common," "coparceners," "corporations sold," "leaseholders," and a great variety of others, with which he would not now trouble the House. While such a state of things existed it could not be a matter of wonder that many persons in the country who had a clear right of voting refused or neglected to exercise it, because they would not be subjected to trouble, expense, and waste of time. One great good gained by an alteration of the system, and the adoption of a simple, uniform, and intelligible form, would be that the annual expense now incurred by the country for the registration of voters would be got rid of. The simple result of the system as it stood was that the country did not believe that that House represented the people. The people found votes and proceedings in that House that were altogether at variance with the best interests of the mass of the community. They found class interests attended to; they found that particular persons connected with the aristocracy were in very great favour; and they found that special interests—the agricultural interest, for example—were peculiarly favoured by exemption from taxes which other people paid. They saw that the agricultural interest had been lightly handled, and no wonder; for, until a few years ago, no person could sit in that House unless he had 300*l*. a year in land. In Ireland matters were pretty much the same; but in Scotland a better system prevailed. There, any man who was an elector might be elected; no qualification was required. In Scotland, therefore, a working man might be returned as well as a man of land; and he wished to know what good reason there was against the return to that House of a working man, if a body of constituents thought fit to elect him, although he had not 300*l*. a year? In any point of view, the injustice and inconsistency of the present system was manifest, and the discontent that was abroad arose from their own acts, and from a system which they had it in their power to remedy and correct. He submitted to the House that the time had now come when they ought to make this change. He would not now dwell upon the great increase of taxation, nor yet upon the increase of expenditure, whether in the Army, the Navy, or the Miscellaneous Estimates; his own opinion was that one-third of such expenses might be saved. There was a proof of that at the period of the Reform Bill, when the hon. Gentlemen who passed that measure brought down the expenditure of the country by some millions. But of late years, since the public had become indifferent to what their representatives were doing, the expenditure had risen up from the comparatively low figure of those days to its present enormous amount. Returns had been moved for by the hon. Member for Liverpool, which showed the increase was year by year, and million after million, until we had arrived at a state of increased taxation, with decreased profits and decreased labour. Was it possible to believe that under these circumstances the people of England were to remain satisfied with the injustice of exclusion from their civil rights? Was it fair and right to expect them to be without discontent? They ought not to be contented; and, if they had not been regardless of their duty, they would have taken care what class of men they sent to that House. He did not now see the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth in his place; but he held in his hand a statement of that right hon. Gentleman, which was of great importance to be borne in mind—a declaration made at the time when the right hon. Baronet had thought fit to disfranchise the 40*s*. freeholders in Ireland. Speaking of the suffrage, the right hon. Baronet had said—

> " No doubt it is a vested right, but it is a right that differs in its character from the rights of property, and other strictly private rights. It is a public trust, given for public purposes, to be touched, no doubt, with great caution and reluctance; but still, which we are competent to touch if the public interest manifestly demands the sacrifice."

Yes, and it was touched on that occasion, by striking off 240,000 freeholders in Ireland. Let the people bear in mind, that every voice sent into the House by the influence that now existed was a voice against them, to keep up the present extravagant system of taxation, and to prevent the simplification and reduction which ought to take place. It was the fault of the people if they did not come forward, for, under the Reform Bill of 1832, they had at least this undoubted advantage—that whereas before that time the boroughmongers could send their own Members into the House for their own peculiar benefit and advantage, and divide the House between two factions, each contending only for its individual interests, that state of things had been very much altered. Some hon. Gentlemen on the opposite side had been heard to regret that the last Reform Bill was likely to injure and destroy the power of the Crown. Why, the fact was the very reverse, because before that measure passed the King of England had been in the hands of two parties, Tory and Whig, and he could not do as he pleased, or choose his Ministers, but at their dictation. But from the day that Bill became law, and power was given to the 10*l*. householders, they, if they did their duty and fulfilled the trust reposed in them, might quietly, if they were so minded, send men into that House at the very next election, who would act up to the necessities of the times and the real interests of the people. That might be done in a perfectly constitutional mode — the only mode in which it ought to be done—and that was what he would counsel them to do. But, while they did that, he hoped they would not be so selfish as to interfere with that great extension of the suffrage which he thought was necessary for the welfare of the country. The disturbances excited by the Chartists had been complained of; and he was sorry to say that, for the last ten years, they had interfered with almost every public meeting that had been held, until they had almost practically destroyed one of the most important elements of the British constitution—the right of the people to meet. He had always complained of them on this score, because, whatever might be their own opinions, they ought not to have interfered to prevent the opinions of others on all subjects being perfectly free. When he looked back upon the grounds of discontent that existed, the numerous petitions that had been presented, and the way in which those petitions had been received—petitions again and again ridiculed and treated in no measured manner in that House—he was not surprised that the plan of family petitions had been adopted—a plan which he believed had originated with Mr. Livesey of Preston. He approved of this, and hoped that no petitions would be presented to the House in future without the addresses and occupations of the parties signed being appended to their names. That would prevent all mistakes. The Act of Charles II. referred to petitions signed by more than twenty persons, and he had lately presented some twelve or fourteen, signed agreeably to the Act of Parliament—by not more than twenty persons—and he should be glad to see that rule observed. It was unnecessary for him to say more than he had to satisfy the House as to the inequality of the present system, of the great number excluded from the suffrage, and of the dissatisfaction that prevailed. The remedy he was now to propose was quite constitutional, and was merely a restoration of the rights of the parties. He had placed on the Paper the following resolution:—

> " That this House, as at presented constituted, does not fairly represent the population, the property, or the industry of the country, whence has arisen great and increasing discontent in the minds of a large portion of the people; and it is therefore expedient, with a view to amend the National Representation, that the elective franchise shall be so extended as to include Householders—that Votes shall be taken by Ballot—that the duration of Parliaments shall not exceed Three Years; and that the apportionment of Members to population shall be made more equal."

Some anxiety had prevailed in the country—as he had had occasion to know—concerning the omission of a word in the resolution which was intended to include all householders. This had arisen from an error on his part, and he would now proceed to explain what he proposed. On the authorities he had already quoted as to the rights of Englishmen, not wishing to create any alarm, or that it should be thought he would not distinguish between a vagrant and a person who really ought to have a vote, he adopted the definition of Whitelock, whom he had before referred to as having been approved of as an authority by those who had carried the Reform Bill, as Lord Grey and Lord Brougham. He begged further to state, that the reason that the words "household suffrage" were not used in the resolution was this—the gentlemen who had met as a committee and requested him to bring forward this question, had agreed on certain terms for the resolution, but they had different interpretations among them of the word "household." He (Mr. Hume) would therefore take upon himself to give a definition as follows:—

> "That every such person of full age, and not subject to any mental or legal incapacity, who shall have occupied a house, or part of a house, for twelve months, and shall have been rated to the poor for that period, shall be registered as an elector; and every lodger shall have the right to claim to be rated to the poor, and after such rating and residence for twelve months he shall be registered as an elector."

There would be no difficulty in carrying out this object. The apparatus all existed. In every parish there were ratings to the poor, and persons who kept account of those ratings. All that was wanted was to have so much of residence as should separate and distinguish the steady inhabitant, who was entitled to a vote, from the vagrant, who was not entitled to one. He knew that this proposition would exclude a certain portion of the population; but at the same time it would include a great many, and be a strong inducement to a great many more, who would remain fixed in their residence for twelve months for the sake of being registered. He was not aware of any difficulty that existed. By the present law every house was rated to the poor; and the Act conferring this suffrage would provide that every man who so desired might, upon entering upon the occupation of part of a house, have a right to be rated for a portion, whatever it might be, of the poor-rate assessed upon that house. Thus registration and residence, both of which were important, would be secured, and a line would be drawn between the mere vagrant and the worthy and educated man who was now excluded from the suffrage merely on account of the nature of his occupation. It might be argued that this proposal did not keep up the distinction between personal rights and property. He did not wish to draw that distinction too tight; but he must say, that by the law as it stood, too much attention had been paid to bricks and mortar, and too little to brains, and the time had now come when common sense should prevail. He submitted to the House that the proper course to pursue would be, to abolish all qualifications now existing in boroughs, and substitute this simple and intelligible principle, by which a large portion of the people now excluded would be admitted. The noble Lord and some others might say that it would admit too many; but that was not his opinion. The more were admitted, the better the chance of a free and fair expression of opinion, and of doing away with bribery and other influences which had been brought to bear. He would tell hon. Members who might not have had the experience of the working men which he had had, that he had held his position in that House, and been protected, for some twelve or fourteen years during the worst of times, by the virtue and honesty of the working men of Montrose; and the five burghs had kept him in that House in spite of every effort made by the whole Tory aristocracy, who would have given his weight in gold only to get rid of him. The working men now thought and acted for themselves; and hon. Gentlemen should remember that the schoolmaster had been abroad, and that there was a great difference between the days of 1831 and those of 1848. Public affairs were now far better understood, although he could wish education had been still more widely extended. He thought that a large suffrage—such as he hoped to see realised before long—was so consistent with the interests of all classes, high and low, that he believed no Minister would be able long to refuse it. It was as clear to him as any proposition he had ever examined, that if those were admitted within the pale of the constitution who were now ranging discontented over the country, a grand cause of such discontent would be removed, and thereby the number of advocates of order and peace would be increased. This, therefore, was the principal object; all the others were merely subsidiary, The extension of the suffrage was the one great object; all the others were matters of detail. Having obtained an extension of the suffrage, the result would be—for he would not trouble the House with figures—according to his estimate, that 2,000,000 of votes would be added to the constituency. This increase of the constituency was itself a good. The more votes that were added the better. He hoped that all would be included in the franchise who deserved it; for it was a heartbreaking circumstance to see men of ability and talent, though in a low condition of life, excluded by law from the exercise of their rights in a representative constitution. If this was not to be a representative constitution, it must be a military constitution; it must be one or the other; and he hoped, when he looked round at the state of the Continent, that this truth would be remembered; it ought to ring in the ears of those who obstructed the extension of the principle of representation, and he hoped it would continue to ring in their ears until the object was obtained. If he found the country prepared for this change, he was bound to explain why the resolution, put forth as the resolution of a Committee, was put in this shape. It was thought better to throw out the principle, and to let the country say how far they would go. Having answered what he considered as the calumny of the noble Lord, and having stated the definition which he was anxious to embody in an Act, in order that his plan should have effect and operation, he would mention one circumstance, which he had referred to on a former occasion—namely, why he had put all into one resolution. The extension of the suffrage without protection would, in his opinion, be an evil, since in many cases voters would be subject to a coercion and an influence which was not very delicately exercised by masters; he therefore thought it perfectly right, and he took it upon himself to express the opinion on the part of the community at large, that voters should be protected. It was not the humbler classes alone who needed this protection; the petitions had not been confined to those classes. All had joined—Conservatives and Whigs, the man of wealth and the tradesman, mayors and justices of the peace, had joined in the prayer that the suffrage should be extended; and the next and most important question was, in what manner it should be exercised. Hitherto there had been the grossest inequality. What was to be done? It was not his intention to adopt the plan proposed by some, of cutting the country into squares. He was one of those who thought that every change was an evil. Every change ought, in his opinion, to be well considered beforehand; and he never would advocate any change merely for the sake of change, or unless he was sure it would effect great good. He did not, therefore, propose to divide the country anew, and he did not propose to alter the proportion of Members for England, Scotland, and Ireland. He would leave the proportions the same as they now were. He was aware that there were counties with a population treble the amount of other counties, and it might be desirable to alter the limits of some counties, as well as of some boroughs. He had the number of the population in each county and in each borough, and he could state what should be the average of each. The next proposition was the vote by ballot. He knew that this subject had been very fully discussed in the House upon former occasions, and he was not now disposed to renew the discussion; but he would notice one objection to the ballot, namely, that it was un-English. If the ballot was un-English, was it meant that bribery and coercion, against which it was meant to guard, were English? If the franchise was a trust, those in possession of it should vote according to their honest opinion. If a man came into the possession of an estate giving him the command over a certain number of votes, why should the men who had them be called upon to vote at all, when they could not do so honestly? But was it those men alone who required protection? Why, men with hundreds and thousands a year had not courage to vote as they ought, and required protection as well as the poor man. But it was the poor man he wished chiefly to protect against the rich, in order that he might give his vote freely, without suffering the consequences which in many cases a working man endured if he gave an honest direction to his vote. What was surprising was, that the higher classes did not object to the ballot amongst themselves. They should do to others as they would be done by. When they got to their clubs they voted by ballot, and why not permit the poor man to exercise his franchise by ballot? He wished any man when he came to vote, to be able to go in an erect and independent manner and exercise his right; he wished him to be as independent in that act as the hon. Member for Sunderland opposite, and therefore he thought the ballot was necessary to the due exercise of the elective franchise. Having disposed of this point, the next was the duration of the Parliament. Some proposed that Parliaments should be elected for five years, some for three years, and some for two years. He admitted that there was no rule by which a person could form an opinion upon this question, which depended upon practical experience. His own opinion, after all his experience in that House, led him to say that if the Parliament were elected for a not longer time than three years, that term would afford a sufficient opportunity of control over the representatives. If the elections were annual, it would occasion trouble, delay, and expense, though if his plan were adopted, candidates would be put to little expense. He thought, however, taking it altogether, that Parliaments ought not to be elected for more than three years. These were, therefore, his propositions—household suffrage, under the conditions he had mentioned; the more equal apportionment of Members to population; triennial Parliaments; and vote by ballot. There was likewise a fifth proposition which he wished to adopt. He wished to act upon the principle he had before referred to, of doing to others as others did to him. He sat in that House without qualification. He was an elector, and as an elector he had a title to be elected. In Scotland there was no qualification required—no property qualification—but the fact of being an elector. He was anxious to put the people of England and Ireland on the same footing in this respect as those of Scotland, where there was no property qualification, and where even working men of talent who had no property qualification were not therefore excluded from the House. Upon this ground, he thought that all the rest of the United Kingdom should be put upon the same footing as Scotland was, which would open the door for the removal of property qualification. This was the plan of reform which he thought ought to be adopted; he thought if the House stopped short of this the plan would be defective; he thought they ought to carry it out entire, and they should beware of making such another mistake as they had done in 1832. In justification of his views he had no occasion to refer—but he must refer—to the sentiments expressed by the noble Lord when he introduced the Reform Bill in 1831, which he supported in this strong manner; and he (Mr. Hume) saw no reason why the noble Lord should have since changed his opinions. The noble Lord, on the 1st of March, 1831, said—

> "But what is the case at this moment? The whole people call loudly for reform. That confidence, whatever it was, which formerly existed in the constitution of this House, exists no longer—it is completely at an end. Whatever may be thought of particular acts of this House, I repeat that the confidence of the country in the construction and constitution of the House of Commons is gone, and gone for ever. I will say more. I will say that it would be easier to transfer the flourishing manufactures of Leeds and Manchester to Gatton and Old Sarum, than to re-establish confidence and sympathy between this House and those whom it calls its constituents. I end this argument, therefore, by saying, that if the question be one of right, right is in favour of reform—if it be a question of reason, reason is in favour of reform—if it be a question of policy and expediency, policy and expediency are in favour of reform."

He (Mr. Hume) could not use stronger language to support his arguments than this; and it was only necessary to read it to show what the sentiments of the noble Lord then were. There was another passage in the same speech of the noble Lord, which it was very important that the House should bear in mind. The noble Lord showed the necessity of a change in the state of the representation at that time; and he (Mr. Hume) wanted to show what the noble Lord's opinions then were:—

> "It will not be necessary on this occasion that I should go over the ground which has frequently before been gone over, for arguments in favour of a change in the state of the representation; but it is due to the House that I should state shortly the points on which the reformers rest their case. In the first place, then, the ancient constitution of our country declares that no man shall be taxed for the support of the State, who has not consented by himself, or his representative, to the imposition of these taxes; the well-known statute *De Tallagio non concedendo* repeats the same language; and although some historical doubts have been thrown upon it, its legal meaning has never been disputed. It includes 'all the freemen of the land,' and provides that each county should send to the Commons of the realm two knights, each city two citizens, and each borough two burgesses."

He read the next passage to introduce the two branches of his plan, namely, the ballot and the duration of Parliaments:—

> "I ought to notice certain points which are looked to with great interest by the most zealous advocates for reform, but which are not included in the proposed measure. In the first place, then, I have to state that there is no provision in

this Bill for shortening the duration of Parliament. That is a subject which has been much considered; but upon the whole, without stating the opinion of His Majesty's Ministers on it, I may observe that it was thought better to leave that matter to be brought forward as a separate question, than to bring it at the end of a Bill affecting franchises and matters of local reference, separate and essentially different from any question concerning the duration of Parliament. Without saying to what opinion His Majesty's Ministers incline on this point, I may say that they consider it of the utmost importance not to burden this measure with any other, but to reserve it by itself, leaving it to any other Member, at any time that may be considered fitting, to introduce the question, and to make it the subject of future consideration.

"There is another question, likewise, which has excited a vast deal of interest in the country, and of which no mention is made in this Bill—I mean the vote by ballot. I have no doubt the ballot has much to recommend it as a mode of election. More ingenious arguments never fell under my eye on any subject than I have seen in favour of the ballot"—

He (Mr. Hume) believed that the noble Lord and his Colleagues were at that time in favour of the ballot—

"but at the same time, I am bound to say that I hope this House will pause before it sanctions the Motion which the hon. Member for Bridport is to make, and adopts the mode of voting by ballot."

Now, he (Mr. Hume) said that these arguments of the noble Lord (Lord John Russell) were very good, and ought to weigh with the House on the present occasion; but he wanted to clear away, as the noble Lord did, the objections to a great measure of reform, and in the same speech the noble Lord referred to the doubts entertained by some as to the expediency of bringing forward a great and effectual measure of reform, when the noble Lord said—

"I think, therefore, that they have a right to be believed, when they come forward with a measure of effectual reform, and say that they do not do so for any sinister purpose of their own. Interested as they are—all must be—in the future welfare and prosperity of the country, they do think that this measure will tend to promote that future welfare, and secure that future prosperity; and, above all, they do think that it is the only way calculated to insure permanency to that constitution which has so long been the admiration of foreign nations, on account of its popular spirit; but that admiration cannot be made to exist much longer, unless, by an infusion of new popular spirit, you show that you are determined not to be the representatives of small classes or particular interests, but that you will form a body which, representing the people—which, springing from the people—which, sympathising with the people, can fairly call upon the people to support any future burdens, and to struggle with any future difficulties you may have to encounter, confident that those who ask them so to do are united heart and hand with them, and look only, like themselves, to the glory and welfare of England."

Were not all these observations applicable to the present time? He could not show in stronger language the necessity of bringing forward and adopting the plan he proposed than by citing this passage of the noble Lord's speech. Upon these grounds he thought that the Government were bound to give their support to his plan, which the Government, as far as the noble Lord was concerned, had approved; for no stronger reasons, no stronger arguments, could be adduced in its favour than those he had read from the noble Lord's speech. He would repeat once more, that he thought the time had arrived when an important onward step must be taken. If they only did justice to the mass of the people, they might rely upon this, that the mass of the people would give them cordial and unqualified support; but of this they might equally rest assured, that if they continued to exclude a large portion of the people from the enjoyment of civil rights, it would be impossible for the Government of this country any longer to repress universal discontent. To his mind nothing could be clearer than this, that they must freely grant civil rights to their fellow-subjects, or else they must be prepared to coerce them. They had already—most prematurely, in his opinion—begun the plan of coercion, and it certainly had been productive of no good fruits. He meant, not merely recent coercion, but that also of a more distant date. Let him be allowed to refer to the year 1793. That was a period when the first French Revolution raised in this country a wide-spread and eager demand for more popular institutions. The cry of reform was then raised with great loudness and strength; and he entreated them to look at the measures that were then taken for the purpose of repressing that cry. Let them look at the measures that were taken for the purpose of putting down reform, and let them look at the penalty which this country paid for the pleasure of carrying those measures into practical operation. All possible means of coercion were then resorted to, and what did we pay for it? No less a sum than 600,000,000*l*. England added 600,000,000*l*. to her debt—it might be 800,000,000*l*.—the debt was 1,000,000,000*l*., and certainly at the lowest computation 600,000,000*l*. of that must be set down to the account of the war, which war arose altogether out of attempts to coerce the people. Looking back, then, as no one at present could help doing, to the state of things in 1793, could any rational and dispassionate man deny that all we had since then suffered in the way of war and its consequences, in the weight of public taxation, and in the misery and distress which followed in its train, might all have been avoided if Parliamentary reform had been conceded in good time? But the aristocracy were against it, the Sovereign was against it, and that arch-traitor to reform, Mr. Pitt, was against it. That Minister, who in 1785 took his great stand upon reform principles, kept this country under the severest coercive rule throughout the many years that his administration lasted. Such had been the consequence of formerly refusing to make any concessions to the just demands of the people; and such again would be the inevitable consequence of any resistance to the popular will: that which the people of England had done before they would do again. It was the duty of the Legislature to concede that which they believed to be just and right, and to trust to the people; if they trusted the people they would be perfectly safe, but if they deceived the people they might expect severely to suffer for that crime. Trust the people, and there need be no ground for alarm; the people were as much and more interested than the wealthier classes were in the maintenance of law and order, for there were none in the community more interested than the working men in the public tranquillity, for they would be the first to suffer by any thing like disturbance. Persons of property, though they might to some extent suffer, could get through such difficulties infinitely better than the poor working man; he was, therefore, much more interested than those who belonged to any other class in preserving the institutions of the country from any species of harm. If the Legislature denied the fair demands of the people, let them not suppose that the working man could be insensible to so great a wrong—let them grant the boon in time, and they would meet with nothing but gratitude in return. On that ground, then, and on the other grounds which he had stated, he should say it was the duty of the Ministers of the Crown to counsel Her Majesty, and assure her that the proposed change was for the benefit of the Monarchy. They should tell her that they did not make this demand for the especial benefit or advantage of a class; that, on the contrary, it was for the good of the whole body politic that every one should participate in the privileges of the British constitution. The people, whose cause he then pleaded, required no more, and they would be content with no less. He asked the House to agree with his Motion more as a pledge than anything else that they would carry out the principle of reform. If the House agreed to his Motion, such assent would not have the effect of pledging them to any of the details of any measure that he might seek to found upon a Motion so agreed to. Further, if they permitted him to bring in a Bill, hon. Members who supported his Motion might nevertheless propose any alterations that they thought proper in the Bill when it came before the House. If he exceeded the just limit of reform, they might correct and curtail what he proposed. If he fell short of what the necessity of the case demanded, they might extend his plan; but he hoped that the House would at least come to such a decision as would restore confidence and impart peace to the agitated feelings of the country, for they much needed a confidence and peace which every one felt they did not at present enjoy. The hon. Gentleman concluded by making his Motion as above stated, correcting an omission by inserting the words "all householders."

Mr. HENRY DRUMMOND:* I regret that the hon. Member for Montrose should have used expressions in the course of his speech calculated to lead persons to imagine that there is any direct connexion between the constitution of this House and relief from suffering of any kind which the public now endure; and it is from language of this nature that the people are always disappointed at the result of the discussions of such measures as that now under our consideration. I am also sorry that he should have based the necessity for the measures which he has proposed, upon the threatened disturbances on the 10th April, and given it as his opinion, that the agreeing to his plan would have been a better way of preserving the public peace than that which was adopted by Her Majesty's Ministers. It happens, however, that the preservation of the peace was entrusted to them, and not to him, and they were in possession of the necessary information to enable them to judge of which were the most efficient means, and he was not in the possession of such information; and, as to whether that peace were to be preserved by the police or by the military, was a mere question of whether men liked to have their heads broken with a staff or shot by a musket; a question which is a pure matter of taste, that each may decide for himself, the essential point being that the peace should be preserved, and the mode by which that was done being a minor and very secondary object. Fortunately for the country, the mode adopted by the responsible advisers of the Crown did prove effectual, and they are entitled to the gratitude of all peaceable people for the steps they had taken. With all possible deference to the hon. Member, I find it extremely difficult to arrive at an accurate idea of his meaning: in one part of his speech he spoke of the elective franchise as a right, and in another as if he considered it in the light of a trust. Again, I am not able to satisfy myself as to what the hon. Member considers a Parliament to be, for at one time he treated it as if it were a deliberative assembly, and at another he called it the Executive. Again, he spoke of his Motion having been drawn up and entrusted to him by a committee: now, a committee is a small body of persons to whom something is committed by a larger body, but we have heard of no such body who had made such an appointment. [Mr. HUME: The people.] The people! Well but the word people is an abstraction; the only legitimate organ through which the people collectively can speak is the Queen, and I never heard that the hon. Member had been sent for by Her Majesty.

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* From a corrected Report.

But leaving the reasonings of the hon. Member, let us come to the substantive matter which he has brought forward. I might refer to some pamphlets of mine written in the year 1829, in which an extension of the franchise is recommended, and also the shortening of the duration of Parliaments, to prove that the subject has been for a long time under my consideration. The subject possesses great intrinsic interest, and it has derived adventitious importance from recent circumstances both in this country and on the continent of Europe, so that, even apart from the speech of the noble Lord which has been referred to, we shall all be obliged to discuss it with our constituents at the next election; and I will say, in the language of the learned author of the *Œdipus Judaicus*, that "he who will not reason is a bigot, and he who cannot is a fool;" we must be prepared to give intelligible reasons for what we will grant, and for what we will withhold. We must consider who the parties are from whom the petitions for this measure have proceeded. I believe, in all the black catalogue of human misery there is none equal to that of a strong and healthy parent, willing to devote all his powers to the support of his children, but unable to do so, and compelled to see them perishing for want before his eyes. The first of modern poets has depicted this suffering in *Ugolino*. We have all read lately of sufferings so great of this nature, that even the strongest feelings were violated, and mothers were known to promote the death of some of their children, that they might have the means of supporting others a little longer. No wonder that persons in such extremities were willing to follow any desperado, or to adopt any scheme however wild which promised them the possibility of bettering their condition. These persons are the most clamorous, and they were the ready instruments of others who had cooler heads and fuller bellies. Another class that called loudly in favour of reform were the intelligent operatives: men who were skilled in all those arts in which some science was necessary, such as dyers, practical chemists, makers of machinery, workers in metals, miners, engine manufacturers, &c. &c. These classes have for the most part no votes, and although earning high wages, they generally consume all they earn. One man I know, who though gaining often above five guineas a week, never has a farthing in his pocket on the following Monday; and most of them earn from 18*s*. to 30*s*. a week. All these are deprived improperly of the franchise; they one and all want improvement in their physical condition; they care nothing about theories of government; but what they require is the greatest enjoyment for the wages they earn, and the greatest amount of reward for the work they do. These classes are the tools with which the real clamourers for reform work. The clamourers are men of a higher class of intellectual acquirement; doctors without patients, lawyers without briefs, writers in public journals, clever dreamers of every kind, who want to see our present social system reduced to chaos, in order that they might be able to fish up a new constitution out of the abyss. It is necessary to distinguish between these three separate classes, and not to confound them all in the common term of Chartists, using it as a term of reproach. I remember when a "Reformer" was considered a black sheep, who was to be expelled from the society of his family and acquaintance; next came the name "Radical," and now Chartist is the word; and although the word Chartist does certainly include every worthless character in the country, there are doubtless many worthy men banded under the same title. All of them, however, seem to have strange notions respecting the first principles of government. A meeting was lately held in Birmingham, the proceedings of which have been highly panegyrised in a respectable journal; I call the journal respectable because it is exceedingly well written, and has a large circulation. I am aware that the term respectable is somewhat equivocal, and that when a witness on Thurtell's trial said that he was respectable, and was asked by the counsel what he meant by the word respectable, he replied that "Mr. Thurtell kept a gig." I conclude the writers keep gigs, and are in short respectable. Now, at this meeting an alderman, also I suppose respectable, made use of these words:—

> "But of all things let the people be true to themselves; let there be no dispute about mere words; for himself he had no hesitation in saying that he was a complete Chartist, nothing more nor less; but was that to prevent him from joining hand and heart in such a movement as this; laying aside minor differences for a public good? He believed they were all loyal enough. England had flourished under the system of a King, Lords, and Commons; and although, if he were going to frame a new constitution, he might be disposed to dispense with the King and the Lords, still he would rather endure such ills as those entailed, than fly to changes which might produce bloodshed, havoc, desolation, and misery. Let, however, the rulers of this country—the powerful in this country—remember that there was a spirit of endurance implanted by God in the heart of man beyond which he could not go. With a population on the verge of starvation, what safety and security are to be expected? What the limits of endurance are may not be spoken, even though they were known; but when the period comes that they are outstretched beyond their natural limits, farewell to the love of order which knits men together—farewell to the ties of humanity. Let Lord John Russell beware of that hour. Great as are the evils we have to endure —great as are the wrongs of which we have to complain—let us all stand for 'peace, law, and order;' not bating one jot of our firmness of purpose to obtain our just demands. We will adopt as our motto the three words I have just uttered to you; but if the time comes when the bonds which knit those together are rent asunder—if the Prime Minister and legislators hesitate too long —let it not be laid to our charge that we were the first to trample on social institutions, and to raise the signal for anarchy."

Such is the language held at a meeting which was highly applauded in a respectable journal, and held up as a model of propriety. Now, I think it should be laid down by this House as a fixed principle, from which nothing shall induce us to depart, that we will uphold the institutions of the country; we must not regard the Crown and the Lords as evils to be endured; and if we must part with one or other portion of our existing system, it certainly is not the Crown and the Lords that I think we could do best without.

Having considered the three classes of persons who unite in demanding reform, let us next consider the things for which they are asking. I have already mentioned the extension of the suffrage. I think people are clearly entitled to this since the passing of the Reform Bill. I was no party to that Bill. I hated it at the time, and I hate it still; but as it has passed, nothing is left for us now but to carry it out. The former franchises were taken away, and a 10*l.* franchise established. But there is no principle in 10*l.* which is not equally to be found in 9*l.* 19*s.* 6*d.* That limit cannot stand. They who talked of the Reform Bill being a final measure, must have had an extraordinary want of foresight not to see that it was merely a first step to a vast number of measures. As to what should be the extent of the suffrage, I will not now enter into any details, but merely say that as far as you can define property, there let it extend. There is an absurd cry against being ruled by the aristocracy, and it was said that this House will never do its duty to the people until all the labouring classes are represented. But does the hon. Member mean that every separate department of industry must be separately represented? We have had today presented to the House petitions from the brush makers, and petitions from the bellows makers; and does he mean that the bellows makers all over England are to be gathered together for the purpose of choosing a representative? Gentlemen talk about returning representatives for all classes; but the moment such a measure is attempted to be worked out, its absurdity is manifested. Although the hon. Member for Montrose says that there is great dissatisfaction with the Reform Bill, I much doubt whether there ever was a time when the labouring classes were so much represented, as several of that class are now sitting in the present House. I am not going into a genealogical inquiry of the pedigree of Members, but by referring to *Dod's Parliamentary Companion,* hon. Members would be enabled to judge for themselves on this point. The whole question turns upon what is the meaning of the word aristocracy. In uncivilised society it means the strongest, and in civilised society it means the wisest. In every case it must be the aristocracy which rules. Some persons may indeed think one man the wisest, and I may think some other the wisest; and how is wisdom to be defined by Act of Parliament? You cannot make equality. The cry for equality indicates something unsound in the mind and spirits of men. There is no equality throughout all nature. There is no equality in any one of the three kingdoms, animal, vegetable, or mineral; if men are to be discontented, therefore, because others are their superiors, and that all are not equal, they must be discontented to all eternity.

With respect to triennial Parliaments, I certainly think that it would be a very great advantage if the duration of Parliament was shortened, and that Members were oftener thrown back upon and brought into contact with their constituents: whether this be done by triennial or annual Parliaments, does not much signify; they are both according to the ancient practice; but Parliaments for five years, which the hon. Member has mentioned, are a new experiment. I have no faith in any thing new, and I dislike septennial Parliaments because they are of Whig invention; they might be and probably were necessary for that party at the time they were enacted, but they were made for a temporary purpose, and should have ceased when the occasion ceased which called them forth.

With regard to the proposition for Electoral Divisions, Universal Suffrage, and No Property Qualifications, they are merely means of obtaining an end which I think we should all most studiously resist. It must be admitted, and it is useless to deny, that it is the interest of the community, looking only to numbers, to make a fresh division of property every year, for the number of those who have got nothing is always greater than the number of those who have got something. These measures all tend to give power to the many who have no property, and such a state of society never did exist on the face of the earth. If we refer to ancient republics, we find Athens with 100,000 freemen and 400,000 slaves who had no political or civil rights whatever; so that four out of five of the entire population were excluded. In Rome all the work and most of the trades were carried on by slaves, who had no civil privileges; and, leaving ancient States, and coming to our own country, the Saxon peasant had no right under the reign of the Edwards and the first Henries. Coming later down, the freeholder was of a different description from that which he was after the Reformation, and still more from that which he was after the Revolution. If you give to those without property the same right which you give to those with property, the power will be in the hands of the masses, who will be driven in times of distress to make a subversion of property, which is a total subversion of society. We have heard about property having duties as well as rights; the expression is absurd, because an abstraction can have neither duties nor rights; but proprietors have duties, and the first duty of every owner of property is to fight for it, and, as a nobleman lately said, "to die for his order;" not to suffer it to be taken from him by any means directly or indirectly; and to resist by moral force, if assailed by moral force—by physical force, if assailed by physical force. If any one doubts that a feeling and intention to make such a division of property is now being manifested, let him attend to the petition which has been this day presented by the noble Lord the Member for Bath. Can any one be so ignorant of the common literature which has appeared in this country within the last twelve months as not to know that there does pervade through a large body of the most intellectual operatives the notion that they have not a due share in the profits of the capitalist? This feeling is gaining ground amongst them; and another feeling also, which is, that every owner of property is a public robber, and that he or his progenitor has taken from the public that which he has appropriated to himself. I cannot cite the exact words in any English work, but I remember them in French. [*Cries of* "Oh! in French."] Do not imagine that there is any difference in theory on this subject between the operatives in France and the operatives in England. I did not expect to hear this assertion denied, or I would have had with me the works to which I allude; but it is the same as that declared in French by the expression *Toute propriété est vol.* All the points of the Charter which I have enumerated tend more or less, directly or indirectly to give power to those persons who I maintain never must have it. Political power must be confined to those who have property, and those who have no property must be entirely excluded from it.

Another dangerous delusion encouraged in the speech of the hon. Member for Montrose is, that there is any necessary connection between the alteration of the constitution of this House, and a diminution of taxation. I am willing to go as far as the hon. Member in censuring the present extravagance, and in endeavouring to curtail the expenditure as much as possible; but I cannot admit that the necessary consequence of the old Reform Bill was an immediate retrenchment and diminution of the public burdens. The Government of that day courted popularity at the expense of the best interests of the country, and sold off the capital of the country, its naval and military stores, which we had afterwards to replace at a great loss. Let retrenchment stand on its own footing; and let the amendment of the constitution of this House stand on its own footing; but if it shall be maintained that by any alteration of the constitution of this House, the expenditure of the country will be necessarily curtailed, that can only take place by a return of such Members as would be dead and insensible to the national interests, to the national honour, to the national power, and would be wholly influenced by their own paltry and local interests. There are already in this House some who boast that they are the representatives of large popular town constituencies; but they are not the representatives of the feelings and judgment of the people of England. Nay, I will say more; the more they are exclusively identified with the interests of those constituencies who send them, the more it becomes the Government to look with jealousy on any of their recommendations; it being the duty of the Crown to knit contending interests together, and not to allow one to be absorbed by or sacrificed to another. The popular town constituencies, of which hon. Members opposite boast, do not for the most part send men to Parliament fitted to take in a large grasp of the general interests of the country; and the consequence is that whenever they cannot get their own little whim or crotchet carried, they get out of humour and threaten the House, saying, "You do not know what the people out of doors are saying," meaning by the word people their own little class or party. We have heard most extraordinary statements by Members of this description; we heard it declared lately, that in the opinion of such Members, the noble Lord at the head of the Government was influenced in his course of policy and in his measures by the conversation of drawing-rooms and clubs; now any person who made such remarks showed that he was as ignorant of the habits of English society as he was of the customs of China.

There is great discontent throughout the country, and there ever will be, because this House is a great and expensive club, into which it gratifies the vanity of many people to get; and as long as there exists among men a thing which one wants to gain, and others have to give, so long there will be inducements of some sort or other held out: there will always be a *quid* for the *quo*. The candidate says to the popular constituency, "Oh! if you will send me to Parliament, you shall see what reforms I will make; there shall be no more taxes or starvation; the old story of Cockney land shall be realised, and pigs shall run about ready roasted." But men find the House of Commons a different place from that which they imagine it to be; they cannot have their own way; there are others as wise who want to have theirs; and the decision of the House is the aggregate wisdom of contending interests. Promises are made which no House of Commons could ever grant; and the people are discontented because their demands are refused by the House, which were promised by their representatives, and expectations were held out which no Government could realise, just as the Government in France held out the expectation that it had power to feed the people. You may constitute the House as you will, but no House will ever have power to relieve the distress of the people. It is a gross delusion to insinuate to the people that any thing but misery is the lot of the great mass of mankind, and that that misery can be eradicated by any legislation whatever. There is a sort of instinct, for I can call it by no better name, running through Christendom at the present moment, leading men to suppose that the time is come for the regeneration of the human race, although no one can tell by what means it is to be effected. There shall indeed be a regeneration, but the world must first go through a baptism of blood, and it is that baptism alone for which all exertions like the present now under discussion can prepare it. All your strivings will end in that, for the regeneration never can take place, till He comes to establish it who only has a right to reign in peace over the human race.

LORD J. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise thus early to address the House, because I think the House is entitled to an explanation from me of the views which I entertain, not only with regard to this Motion, but with respect to other propositions to which it is nearly akin, and from which I think—after hearing the speech of the hon. Member for Montrose—it can hardly be dissociated. I must be allowed to allude, as the hon. Member for Montrose has done so, to the petitions that have been presented to the House on this subject, and to what the hon. Gentleman has termed the general opinion that has been expressed by the people. Now, Sir, it does not appear that, except for the provisions called "the People's Charter," any large or numerously signed petitions have been presented to this House in the early part of the Session. With regard to the petitions which have since been presented, and to the meetings which have been held in order to support the Motion of the hon. Member for Montrose, I may be allowed to notice two remarkable circumstances. The one is, that considerable pains have been taken to misrepresent a speech which I made some time ago, when the hon. Gentleman postponed his notice of Motion—it having been represented that in that speech I declared that the people wished for no reforms. I have seen this done with such care, that in some placards all the words I used implying my belief that reforms ought to be made, were carefully expunged, and in some cases asterisks were put in their place. What I said on that occasion was this:—"My belief is, that the middle and working classes desire that there shall be a gradual progress in reform; that this House should give its attention to the questions that are before it; and that in securing the peace and quiet of the country rests their true interest and prosperity." [Mr. COBDEN: No!] Of course I do not deny that which has been repeated over and over again, and which is made the staple of the charge against me—that I said that I did not believe the middle and working classes were in favour either of the People's Charter, or of the plan of reform proposed by the hon. Member for Montrose. But that statement has been used as if it was a declaration against all reform, although, after having excluded these specific measures, I went on to say, that the people desired a gradual progress in reform. In using the word "reform," I excluded no species of reform. I excluded neither Parliamentary reform, nor fiscal reform, nor any other reforms that it might be useful to adopt; but I found so great had been the misunderstanding or misconstruction of my statement, that at a meeting in Marylebone the hon. Member for Montrose (Mr. Hume) moved a resolution to the effect, that Her Majesty's Prime Minister having stated his opinion that the people required no extensive measures of political and fiscal reform, it was resolved—and then the resolution went on. Now, as the hon. Member for Montrose heard what I said, and had the means of ascertaining accurately what my statement was, I think, when that resolution was put into his hands, he should have said, "This is a resolution contrary to the fact. I know it to be so, and it is impossible for me to propose it." [Mr. HUME: It was consistent with the fact, and I knew it.] There is another circumstance, as I have said, which has attended many of these meetings for reform. They have been meetings assembled with the view of supporting the four points comprised in the resolutions of which the hon. Member for Montrose had given notice, and to which he has to-night added a fifth, and of sending petitions to this House in favour of those resolutions. But when the subject came to be discussed, it has repeatedly happened, either that some Chartist rose to move, as an amendment, that every person of full age, and unconvicted of any crime, ought to have a vote, and that this amendment was carried, or that such an amendment having been proposed, there was so great a division in the meeting that the reporters, who generally attend carefully to these matters, were unable to state on which side the majority was. I say, then, with regard to this movement, that, in the first place, it has been in a great degree founded upon a misapprehension of what I, speaking in my place in Parliament, said; and, in the next place, that it is not to be regarded as a movement in support of the proposition of the hon. Member for Montrose, for if we look at the meetings in Leeds, Birmingham, Marylebone, and other large towns, we shall see that there was a great division of opinion, and that in some cases the Chartists had the majority; and where they had a majority, the meetings, I think, could not be considered favourable to the plan of the hon. Member for Montrose. The hon. Gentleman, to my great satisfaction, began his speech by declaring that the plan of reform which I had the honour to propose in 1831, and which was carried into effect by Parliament in 1832, has been mainly instrumental in preserving the peace of this country during the present year. I accept that testimony of the hon. Gentleman as a proof that the plan of reform to which he referred has been useful in averting discontent and in preserving tranquillity, and that it has, therefore, been a great and effectual measure of reform. The hon. Gentleman, indeed, afterwards said, that if the people, acting on their present rights of election, chose those who would fitly represent them—if they attended themselves to their own interests in the manner in which he thought they ought to do—they had the means in their own power of carrying into effect measures which would be most conducive to the public benefit. Why, if that be the case, I think it may make hon. Gentlemen pause before they admit the necessity of any great measure of reform to enable the people to obtain a fair representation in this House, because, according to the hon. Gentleman's own statement, it was only by their mistake of their true interests that the present House does not fairly represent them, and therefore they have an opportunity, at a general election, of being fairly represented. The electors, indeed, may reply to the hon. Gentleman that they have this power, but that they do not choose to use it in the manner he recommends; that they have a better view of their true interests than the hon. Gentleman himself has; and that they have chosen their present representatives, believing—according to their own notions of public policy—that the views of those representatives are sound, although they may not be similar to the views entertained by the hon. Member for Montrose. The hon. Gentleman may contend for any particular right of suffrage, but he cannot contend—whatever right of suffrage may be established—that the people are to adopt all his own notions, and that they are not fairly represented if their representatives do not coincide in his views. The hon. Member for Montrose began his complaints to this House by a declaration that every man who is a contributor to the taxes in any way should have a share in the representation, and that every man of full age who in any way contributed to the taxes has positively a right to vote. Why, if this is a true position, there will be an end of all disputes about the matter; there will be an end to any question as to the proposition of the hon. Gentleman—his limitations, his restrictions, and his qualifications; and he will have nothing to do but, by an Act of Parliament, to acknowledge that right which he says exists in every male person of full age, and at once to admit them to vote. But the hon. Gentleman, in his plan, does not make this proposition. He proposes, according to his resolutions, that the franchise shall be extended so as to include all householders, the word "all" having been left out by mistake. In his explanation of the term "householder," the hon. Gentleman stated that it would include all persons having a fixed residence—even lodgers in a house, who, as I understand, may claim to be rated, and may be actually rated, and placed on the rate-book for the relief of the poor. Why, this is a restriction, a qualification, and a condition, which, if the hon. Gentleman was right in his former proposition, you have not the smallest title to impose. Take the case of a man of full age belonging to a parish in Westminster; he claims his right to vote, but you are to tell him that he has not been registered—that he has not put his name upon the rate-book, and that therefore he cannot be admitted to vote. He replies, "I have an indefeasible right, a constitutional right, as being 21 years of age, and it is impossible for you to deny that right, or to set it aside, by any pretence about rate-books, or registration, or the condition of lodging." The hon. Gentleman, therefore, by this qualification, destroy his own former proposition. The hon. Member for Montrose quoted some sentences of mine when I brought forward the Reform Bill in 1831, which I must admit were somewhat loosely worded. They ought not to be regarded as the foundation of the measure which I then proposed, but I went on to state exactly what the nature of that measure was. I did not leave any doubt about the matter; and every one could judge what was the nature of the proposition which I wished Parliament to adopt. I think, however, that the proposition of the hon. Member for Montrose is of a very different description; it is of a very vague and indefinite character. When the hon. Gentleman says that all householders, including lodgers, are to claim a right to be rated with a view of obtaining the franchise, I really do not understand to how large a portion of the working classes such a proposition would apply. There are many sons living with their fathers, and many persons forming parts of families, who might or might not become part of the constituency to be created under the hon. Gentleman's proposition. The hon. Gentleman has said that there are 6,000,000 of males, of full age, who ought to be entitled to vote, while only 1,000,000, or less, have a share in the present representation. But I imagine that, if the hon. Gentleman's proposition were carried out, and if no man had a right to vote without being rated or registered, it would still be found that there would be at least some 2,000,000 or 3,000,000 of these persons who would be excluded from the franchise. What, then, becomes of his assertion that you have disqualified those who had a right of voting, and that it is beyond the power of Parliament to exclude persons who have a constitutional right to the franchise? I must say at once that I differ entirely from the hon. Gentleman as to the foundation of his proposed representation. In my opinion, that which not only every man of full age, but the whole population of the kingdom, have a right to, is the best government and the best kind of representation which it is possible for the Legislature to give them. The main object of our institutions is good government and the welfare of the people; and we ought not, for the sake of some abstract principles, to lose sight of that great object. In considering this subject, I remember, as was said by the hon. Member who spoke last, that we have a mixed constitution; that the Crown and the House of Lords are part of that constitution; that they are not evils to be endured, but that they are part of the benefits of the institutions we enjoy. I find that one of the greatest and most profound writers of antiquity, in writing on the subject of Government, said in effect, though not perhaps exactly in the words I am about to use, that every Government is formed either of monarchy, of aristocracy, or of democracy; that a Government formed and combined out of these three elements might be easily raised, but it could not easily be brought to pass; or if it should be brought to pass, it could not be durable. Such was the sentiment of a great and profound historian—a sentiment authorised and justified by all his experience—justified almost by the experience of the world in modern times, with the exception of one, and that a most favoured, country. It has so happened that in this country we have had those elements combined which Tacitus said could hardly be combined together—monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy—and it has happened that that constitution has endured. Whenever I have had to discuss or treat of this subject, I have always felt—having had much to do since 1819 with proposing some measures of reform, and promoting others—how nice a matter it was to alter in any way the adjustment of the different parts of the constitution. I remember, on the night before I was about to bring forward the Reform Bill, speaking to an American of distinguished talents, who then represented his country at this Court. I said to him, "I cannot but feel great anxiety in proposing to make an alteration in a constitution which has lasted so long." "Yes," he replied, "so long and so strong." That is, in fact, the truth with regard to our constitution. It has lasted long; it has been very strong; and we should therefore apply ourselves with the utmost care and deliberation, and I will also say with the greatest anxiety, to any plan which proposes to alter the representative body in this House. Let us see, then, whether a Parliament elected by the householders and lodgers would be a better Parliament—would afford a better representation of the people than the present Parliament. It appears to me that if you establish a really household suffrage, the objection to which the hon. Gentleman alluded—that you get a representation of brick and mortar—applies; and it would be a ground of complaint that many persons superior in property and intelligence to the small householders were excluded from the franchise. I do not think it is an objection which can be fairly made to the present mode of suffrage, because that mode makes a choice amongst the householders; it takes property of a certain amount, it takes rating combined with that property, and there fixes the franchise. But if you would admit all householders, without any other qualification, I think such a plan is open to the objection. But then, if you are to make it more general—if you are to make the suffrage universal—I do not see that, having universal suffrage, you could well act upon the plan proposed by the hon. Member, of keeping up the present cities and all but the smaller boroughs of the country; you could hardly avoid that division into equal districts, of equal population, which it is the proposal of the advocates of the Charter to introduce. Now, if I am asked whether such a division into districts and universal suffrage—the suffrage in every male person of full age—would give a better representation of the people at large than the present, and more conducing to the people's interest—I must deny that it would do so. You would have a great number of representatives of the large towns, some fifty representatives for this metropolis, some ten or twenty for other large towns, all of them imbued with the spirit of those towns, and the excited feelings of the population of those towns, but, on the other hand, destroying the smaller boroughs and the middle-sized towns in the country: you would have representatives of the agricultural class, of a totally different character, firmly attached perhaps to the present institutions, but unwilling to adopt reforms which this House, and other Houses of Parliament framed under the Reform Act, have been willing to adopt. I should fear, with a representation so composed, of men totally differing in their political views—one too much inflamed with ideas of extensive amelioration, the other adverse to progress and improvement—you would have a collision and a contest which would be dangerous to its operation, and, above all, would not fairly represent the country which it would affect to represent. It is very easy to say—and nothing is more at hand than the arithmetic which the hon. Member has used—" Here are half-a-dozen boroughs, with 200 or 300 voters in each; and here are half-a-dozen great districts, such as Marylebone and Lambeth; so that you find a million of persons with no more representatives than a few hundreds have." The arithmetic is perfectly clear and plain; but when you come to examine the operation of the system, and the reason of those differences, you will find, I think, that the representation upon the whole is better from your having a large variety of that kind, than it would be if you had one sole kind of representation, and that a representation of numbers. When we were discussing the Reform Bill, a gentleman whose loss we had afterwards to deplore, because he gave promise of great talents in political life—a gentleman whose political views, however, were totally different from mine, Mr. Praed—made a Motion in this House, I think, with a view of giving two Members to boroughs in Schedule B; and he argued most ably, that men of retired habits, who would not face a large body of constituents, who might be men of science, men of talent and information, men of historical knowledge, would be sent to Parliament by those small boroughs, but that they were not people of property in counties who were likely to be sent by any division of a county, nor persons of those opinions or those stirring habits who would be likely to be sent by great towns. And on another occasion I think the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Tamworth (Sir R. Peel) made a similar proposition, and he argued likewise on the great advantage there was in having such a kind of representation. But I will read a few words of what he said upon that occasion with regard to that class of persons representing that portion of the agricultural boroughs. The right hon. Baronet said—

> " The influence of the press, whether it be for good or evil, tells more rapidly and contagiously on the aggregate societies of towns, than on the inhabitants of country districts. Political unions, and all the devices which by means of combination give to men acting in concert a moral force greater than their actual numbers, tend to increase the influence of a manufacturing as compared with an agricultural population. Every consideration, then, derived from the nature of landed property—from its liability to the envy and rapacity of the many—from the position, habits, and characters of those who occupy it—enforce the policy and necessity of providing carefully and permanently for its protection."

At the end of what the right hon. Baronet addressed to the House on that occasion, he said—

> " It was with this object that in framing the Jury Bill I purposely called this class into increased action, and sought to familiarise them with the performance of civil duties, and to multiply their points of contact with the more intelligent inhabitants of towns. Granted that they are indisposed to innovation—that their disposition is to maintain things as they are—that they are governed by local ties and by personal attachments rather than by considerations of general politics—it is on that very account that I conjure you to extend their influence; they constitute the ballast of the vessel of the State. Beware how you heave it overboard under the fatal impression that it is a useless incumbrance, occupying space that might be more profitably employed. It may at times retard the velocity of your movement—it may make you less obedient to the sudden impulse of shifting gales; but this, and this alone it is that enables you to extend your canvass, and insures the steadiness of your course and the security of your navigation."

Sir, I thought those were just sentiments. I said at the time that I thought they were founded on just views of policy; but I conceived that in giving forty Members to the boroughs in Schedule B, giving, I think, sixty Members to other small boroughs, we were providing sufficiently for that class of representatives. I have not in any way changed my opinion that this country would not be fairly represented; that considering that this is a country which has not only commerce and agriculture, but which has in it men of every kind of information—men who have studied the constitution of their country; that there are many in active and many who are not in active life, whose intelligence fits them to be representatives in Parliament, but whose habits do not induce them to seek or qualify themselves for either county representation or the representation of such places as Manchester or Birmingham—the country would not be fitly represented if we merely had representation attached to a certain amount of population. Now, if I am at all right in that view, it disposes very much of the whole of that argument which is put forth in the petitions, that there is an inequality; that small places return as many Members as larger towns; and that you can make out that there are 10,000 voters in one place, and only 300 in another; if I am right in saying that mere numbers ought not to constitute the basis of your representation — that you should endeavour rather to have your House of Commons, like the country itself, composed of various classes and men of various occupations—then the whole argument founded upon the disparity of numbers falls at once to the ground. The hon. Gentleman, however, does not get rid of the disparity. In this, as in the rest of his proposition, he leaves it vague and indefinite what would be the case if we were to adopt his proposition. He tells us that he will leave the existing boroughs, with the exception of some of the smaller; and he mentioned three or four populous towns in Kent. He would leave such places as Canterbury, such towns as Guildford, or Norwich, or Ipswich, exactly in their present situation. But if he did, he would not have exact equality of numbers; and I do not see how those who ask for equality of numbers would be satisfied if there were 10,000 or 20,000 electors in one borough, and only 3,000 or 4,000 in another, how they would be better satisfied than at the present moment. They would still say, "Here is gross inequality—here is inequality existing—let us have a further reform—a just and effectual reform—instead of this mockery of reform which you have been giving us." The hon. Member, at the end of his speech, said, "Let us have a settlement of this question;"—very much the language for which I have been ordinarily reproached when I have quoted the sentiments of Lord Grey and Lord Althorp. The hon. Gentleman could not expect a settlement of the question if his resolution were adopted: as far as I can see, the advocates of "The People's Charter," who are at all events more numerous than his constituents, would still ask that every male should have a vote, and would still ask for equal electoral districts, which he does not pretend to establish. I do not mean to go through the propositions at length which he has placed before the House; certainly I shall not now enter into any long argument with respect to the ballot. I have always thought that if you had the ballot you would know the votes of the parties pretty much as you do now, and that, therefore, it would be no remedy against intimidation, while it would give rise to new sources of complaint. I observe, in reading the accounts of the various meetings, that there has been one at Northampton, at which a gentleman, who was supporting the propositions of the hon. Member, said that he had been told by an American citizen that nothing is more easy than canvassing in America; that it is rather more easy than canvassing in this country; and that he could always tell, by going about a day or two before the votes were to be taken in the United States, how each man whom he canvassed would vote, although the vote was to be given by ballot. I believe that would be the case in England as much as elsewhere. Of course the ballot of itself is not a security to a State. We have seen great discontent arise, and at length a revolution has overtaken the Government of France, though they had the advantage of election by ballot; the Chamber of Deputies was elected by ballot, but the ballot was no security against a revolution. Another proposition of the hon. Member is that the duration of Parliament should not exceed three years. Now, if I could agree with the hon. Member (Mr. H. Drummond) in thinking that we ought more frequently to go before our constituents, I really should maintain, instead of saying with him that it is matter of indifference whether we have annual Parliaments or triennial, that an annual Parliament is to be preferred. I think what you want is, not the power of dismissing Members when they behave ill, as the hon. Member supposes, for cases with respect to the dismissal of Members are not always on that ground. Every one knows that Mr. Burke was rejected at Bristol, not on account of behaving ill, but on account of the support he gave to civil and religious liberty in various measures that came before the House. It is not, as I think, a frequent change and the dismissal of the servants of the people that you ought to have in view; but, along with something like confidence between representatives and their constituents, and a free interchange of sentiments, you should have in view some kind of stability in the policy of the country. That I believe is secured by the present mode of having Parliaments endure at the longest for six years. I believe it might also happen—though I have no confidence in that—if you had an election every year. I do not think it would happen that, generally speaking, if an election were to take place in every September or October, there would be a great or a frequent change of Members; but, I think, if you took a period of three years, you would find your whole constitution unsettled—that that period of three years just gave time enough for people to consider that they would make a change, while there would not be, as there might if it were yearly, a sort of renewal of a trust which they would be ready and willing to make. I think that if we are to have any change in this respect, it would be better to fix upon one year than three; indeed, I am of opinion that the proposal to limit the duration of Parliaments to three years is about the worst that can be made. Although I once gave an opinion in this House in favour of Parliaments being limited in duration to five years, I am satisfied with their duration as at present limited by law, and I certainly will not give my vote in favour of a proposal to alter it. I think that the dependence of Members upon their constituents is amply sufficient under the existing system. Communications of a very active character are maintained between Members and their constituents; and, although Members may reckon upon having five years' tenure of their seats, I am well aware that the opinions of constituencies exercise the greatest possible influence upon the conduct of representatives. I will now beg leave to subject the question which the hon. Member for Montrose has raised to another test, by which he ought not, I think, to refuse to have it tried. The reform of Parliament was effected in 1832. Have the House of Commons since that time shown themselves to be, as they are represented by some, the servants of the aristocracy, or mere bigots afraid to enter on any reform? Have they shown themselves indifferent to improvement, and regardless of the voice of the people? No one who regards the changes which have been made since the reform of the representation took place, and how readily those changes were adopted by this House when the voice of the people was clearly ascertained, will say that the House of Commons has not responded quickly and readily to public opinion. The new Parliament assembled after the passing of the Reform Act, had not long met before slavery in the West Indies was entirely abolished. That immense change was called for by petitions, and was favoured by the voice of the people; but certainly so vast a change was hardly ever effected by any Legislature in the universe. Very soon after the trade with China was thrown open, and great commercial advantages resulted from that measure. In a year or two afterwards, the commutation of tithes—a measure in which the laity and the clergy were equally interested, but which was surrounded with such difficulties that it baffled the power and intelligence of Mr. Pitt when he wished to accomplish it—was effected. The Dissenters suffered grievances with respect to the celebration of their marriages, and the registration of their births and deaths. Those grievances were soon completely and effectually remedied. In another year or two the municipal corporations of the country were entirely reformed. Before that time many of those corporations were self-elected; but they were then all subjected to popular election, and had an entirely new constitution given to them. In later years the House of Commons has been occupied with measures from the propriety of which a great portion of the House dissents; but those measures certainly effected great changes, and in the opinion of the hon. Member for Montrose those changes are great and beneficial reforms; I allude to the changes in the tariff, by which a number of duties were abolished, and others reduced; and I also allude to that great change which certainly cannot be referred to as evidence of this House being under the Government of the landed aristocracy —I mean the entire repeal of the corn laws. Some hon. Members think that measure injurious; others believe it to be highly beneficial to the country; but at all events it shows, that when considerable popular agitation existed, when public meetings were held, and a great cry for change arose, the House of Commons did not obstinately refuse to listen to the voice of the people, but, on the contrary, completely and at once effected the change which was asked for. Whilst these great changes have been made, other measures have been adopted, such as the reduction of the postage of letters to 1*d*. I was about to allude to the reduction of postage in a parenthesis with other measures; but I really think that, viewed as a great social change, nothing more beneficial has taken place in later times. When you contemplate the enormous increase which has taken place in correspondence, you may estimate the number of persons who were deprived of the benefit of communicating with their friends, and of offering the interchange of domestic affections. I really think that we cannot over-estimate all the advantages which have resulted from that Act. It appears to me, then, that it is impossible to say that under the operation of the Reform Act the House of Commons has been either idle or unwilling to entertain great measures of reform. It must be recollected also—and the experience of every Member who has been long in Parliament will attest the fact—that although so large a number of important measures have been carried, the debates on every subject are more protracted than they used to be, and that therefore the difficulty of carrying many measures in a single Session of Parliament is proportionally increased. The hon. Member for Montrose asks me to agree to the proposition which he has submitted to the House, containing four different points which involve an immense change in the representation. I stated in the passage from a former speech of mine, which I took the liberty of reading to the House because it had been so much forgotten and misrepresented, that I am for gradual reform; and I beg to state that I do not think that reforms should be limited to such measures as I have been referring to—measures for improving the laws relating to fiscal regulations and other matters; but that, although I admit the Reform Act to have been the settlement of a great question, it is desirable to admit into it, from time to time, such alterations and improvements as experience and knowledge may suggest. At the time when I was most attacked for speaking of the Reform Act as a final measure, I expressed myself in these terms of the retention of the freemen as voters in elections:—

"Another alteration was the retention of the freemen, introduced in order to conciliate some who objected to the first Reform Bill, and obtain support to its second reading in the Lords. Here, again, was a change for the worse. If the freemen exercised the franchise corruptly, one of two courses should properly have been taken: the one to disfranchise them altogether—a proposal in which they at first seemed ready to acquiesce—the other, and perhaps the better course, would have been to have treated the freemen in the same spirit in which other rights had been treated. The freemen of old evidently represented the toil and the industry, the mechanical skill and the trading substance of the communities of our towns. They do so no longer. It might have been difficult, but it was not impossible, to make the freemen the proper representatives of one of the most valuable classes of the community—that of the industrious, intelligent, and able mechanics who abound in our great manufacturing and commercial towns, and some of whom only are now admitted to the right of voting. Such a change in the character of freemen would do much to purify our elections and strengthen the House of Commons."

In a subsequent passage I said—

"There are doubtless many defects in the Reform Act which require to be remedied. The 10*l*. franchise is too much fettered by regulation —the annual registration is made a source of vexation and expense — the freemen might be made the pride of the working classes instead of their opprobrium. But changes such as these, introduced when the public mind was prepared for them, and the proposals had been duly weighed, differ entirely from the proposal to found a new Reform Bill on the basis of triennial Parliaments, household suffrage, and vote by ballot."

Those passages are taken from my letter to the electors of Stroud in the year 1839. From 1839 to the present day I believe that neither the hon. Member for Montrose, nor any of those who concur with him in opinion on this subject, have thought it necessary to moot the question of the constitution of the House of Commons. For myself, also, neither officially as a Minister of the Crown, nor when I sat on the other side of the House, have I thought it necessary to introduce any measure of reform with reference to that subject. But, now that several other questions are in the course of settlement, and seeing that public attention is drawn to the question of Parliamentary reform, I think that a time may come—perhaps it is not distant—when reforms of the nature to which I adverted in 1839 may be usefully introduced and carried into effect for the improvement of the representation. I think that the inquiry which we propose to effect by the Bill introduced in the present Session with respect to certain boroughs in which it is alleged, and indeed has been proved, that elections have been carried by corrupt practices, may give us further information than we now possess as to the character of the freemen, and will enable us to determine whether some boroughs ought to be altogether disfranchised, and whether we ought to adopt, with respect to others, the course which has been taken in the case of Great Yarmouth, namely, that of disfranchising the freemen alone. I would, however, be sorry to adopt either of those courses without accompanying measures. I would not wish to see the number of the Members of this House reduced by the disfranchisement of boroughs, and I would be sorry to see the freemen disfranchised without establishing some other right of voting, by means of which the traders and mechanical industry of towns would be represented as they formerly were by the freemen, the retention of whose right of voting I have more than once admitted to be a defect in the Reform Act. The hon. Member for Montrose has by a curious enumeration shown that there exist eighty-five rights of voting, and that he deems a defect in the Reform Act; but I, on the contrary, think it is rather a defect that the great variety of rights of voting which existed under the former constitution of the House of Commons, though tainted by many abuses, were reduced to too much uniformity. I think we might create some new varieties of suffrage; perhaps, by giving the right of voting to persons who have placed money in the savings' banks, and thus shown themselves to be of provident and frugal habits; and to men elected by guilds, that being a proof of their possessing the confidence of their fellow workmen. I will not enter further into these matters at present; but it occurs to me that we might by such means extend the franchise without infringing upon the basis of the representation. I have felt it necessary to make these observations in order to show that even at the time when I was most attacked for declaring the Reform Act to be a final measure, I intimated that I would not object to alter it beneficially. If the hon. Member for Montrose asks me whether I am at once prepared to introduce any extensive measure of Parliamentary reform, I reply in the negative. I might find reason enough for my refusal in the various measures which are now before the House, and to which its attention is already in a great degree directed; but I think that there are other reasons for my abstaining from taking such a course. The hon. Member for Montrose said in the beginning of his speech, that there were circumstances in the existing state of public affairs throughout the world which rendered the present time peculiarly appropriate for introducing a large measure of reform; but, for my part, the circumstances referred to lead me to an entirely opposite conclusion. It is admitted—it must be admitted—that sixteen years ago you adopted a very large measure of reform in the representation, a much larger measure, I believe, than the reformers of that day expected to be introduced. It must be admitted, as the hon. Gentleman has himself this night admitted, that the carrying of that reform, the removing of such blots in our representation as that of Gatton, Old Sarum, and the rest of the nomination boroughs, and the admission to the representation of such populous places as Leeds, Birmingham, Sheffield, and Manchester, have contributed greatly to the giving a larger and more secure basis to our representation. But it cannot, I think, be denied that the House of Commons, thus reformed, has carried measures of great public importance, vast in their changes, and tending to increase the popular power and popular advantage, and at the same time showing that this House was ready to act according to the enlightened opinions of the people. The hon. Gentleman says that our votes this year have been extravagant, and that we have been acting against the opinions of the people in general, in maintaining the great establishments that are kept up. Now, Sir, there are some votes upon those questions concerning which I have desired that the numbers of the Members of this House should be taken and compared with the numbers of electors represented by the majorities, and that the same thing should be done with regard to the minorities. I find that on the division of the 13th of March, 1848, on Mr. Hume's Amendment for limiting the duration of the income-tax to one year, the number of electors represented by the majority was 668,348, and the number of electors represented by the minority was 346,689. I find that in the division of the 20th of March, 1848, also on Mr. Hume's Motion for reducing the number of men for the Navy, the number of electors represented by the majority was 716,278, and the number of electors represented by the minority was 171,317. I find that on a division of 31st March, 1848, on the Motion of the same hon. Member for reducing the number of men to be voted for the Army, the number of electors to be represented by the majority was 600,753, and the number of electors represented by the minority was 165,255. Now, after these divisions upon great questions, I think it cannot be said that the small boroughs have overpowered the votes of those who represented the great mass of the people. They are the votes representing the opinions of the people at the time they were given. That there has been of late years a tendency to increase our establishments on the part of the Government, of the House, and of the people, I think is perfectly true; and it does happen that there is usually a readiness and a disposition, I do not say to waste and extravagance, but to make all our establishments thoroughly efficient, and to have them ready for any purpose for which they may be intended. But when large sums are asked to be voted to maintain these establishments, then it is that popular opinion takes a different direction, and nothing is done except what is strictly and economically required. I think in times of distress such a wish is nothing but natural and fair. My belief is, that if the Government should be found to persist in keeping up establishments not absolutely necessary, this House would be found to check and control them; and I trust that in that respect every reform, and every retrenchment that can be made, will be made by the Government. But in my opinion you have no ground to say at present, that with regard to the question of establishments and expense, the House has done otherwise than represented the nation. My belief is that they have represented the nation. Well, if you find that there has been a great reform made in the constitution of Parliament sixteen years ago—if you find that great measures have been carried by that Parliament thus reformed—if you believe that with regard to any question likely to arise, the House of Commons will represent the people, and no selfish interest of the aristocracy—then I think that with regard to the present Motion this is not the time in which you ought to incur the risk of greater and more organic changes. I think that if these changes are to be accompanied with such dangerous theories as those propounded in the petition presented by my noble Friend the Member for Bath—that if such erroneous and mischievous views of capital, of labour, and of property, are afloat, we may find one sound reason at least why we should hesitate to make at this time any great change in our institutions. I deny entirely the charge that has been made—a most popular and common charge—that the Government of this country is in any way carried on for the benefit of the aristocracy. The rights enjoyed by the aristocracy in this country are no other than the great and general rights which are enjoyed by the people at large. I believe that the people at large do enjoy the full benefit of the Government. But if it is meant to be said that those persons who belong to the aristocracy are to be deprived of their right of assuming a part in the direction of public affairs, and in the discussions and debates in Parliament, then I object to this narrow and extreme doctrine. I never will allow that because a man is called a Stanley or a Howard he is not as much entitled to take his part in public affairs, and in discussions of questions affecting the public interest, as those bearing a name less noble and less illustrious in the annals of the country. But there are other reasons—reasons which this House must be sensible of—for opposing at this moment any great change; reasons connected with events which within the last few months have occurred in other countries. I say that at such a time the advantages which you have had in your free constitution have been to you of inestimable benefit. The stability of that constitution which you have shown amidst all these storms, and the mode in which the institutions of this country have braved all hostile attacks, have excited the admiration, not only of those who are attached to this country, but even of those who have no connexion with it, but who at the same time delight to see order and social peace maintained; while it has brought to you the respect of those even most hostile to your name and progress. I hope that this House will do nothing to lose that admiration or forfeit that respect. You have stood—

> "Like a great seamark, braving every storm,
> And saving all who eye it!"

I trust you will maintain that position—that you will not choose at this time to accede to any vague and indefinite proposal of some measure of reform, which, while it apparently stops short of adopting the People's Charter, cannot actually stop short of ultimately enacting that great change; that you will rather think that it is due to the institutions which you have the happiness to inherit—that it is due to the other advantages you enjoy—that it is due, above all, to that great people whom it is your honour to represent—to give a steadfast and most determined negative to the present Motion.

Mr. W. J. FOX could not but observe that the objections which the noble Lord had urged against the Motion of the hon. Member for Montrose, referred rather to the details of the measure which that Motion indicated, than to the principle upon which it was founded. But those details were not now fairly before the House; and it was with a view to fix the attention of the House, if he could, to the great principle at stake in this matter, that he now ventured to offer a few observations to the House. He thought the noble Lord must have been pleased with the fair opportunity that had been afforded him of correcting any mistake in reference to his expressions on a former occasion. At the same time he considered the noble Lord to have been rather too severe on those by whom he thought those expressions were perverted. His own impression was, that the noble Lord meant to draw a distinction between fiscal reform and organic reform; that he was willing to see the former gradually progressing, but that he would resist the advance of the other in any way whatever. It must have been gratifying to the noble Lord to have the opportunity of telling the country that he was not opposed to further reform in the representative system; but it would have been still more gratifying to the country if the noble Lord had more distinctly hinted what the reforms were to be; what was the principle by which those reforms were to be guided; what would be their extent, and what their results. He confessed that from what the noble Lord had said, there was very little to guide them in their anticipations, and that little was of the most indefinite description. It merely amounted to this—that he would take the opportunity, from time to time, to disfranchise a man who should be guilty of bribery; or to admit a man to the franchise who should have acquitted himself well by making an accumulation in the savings' bank. The broad question of whether the industrial masses of this country were or were not fairly represented in that House, had been scarcely touched either by the hon. Member for West Surrey, or by the noble Lord who followed him. Nor could he think it a fair reference to the meetings which had taken place to dismiss them by a brief remark as to the differences of opinion that existed at them between those who advocated the People's Charter, and those who supported household suffrage. To meet the question fairly, the noble Lord should have shown—not the differences existing between these two views among the people—but how far they were both opposed by a third party who were adverse to any reform at all. To show that there existed a difference between parties who were for going to a certain limit, and others who were for going beyond that limit, availed but little. To point to that discrepancy struck not at all at the matter, unless it could be shown that they were not agreed that some considerable reform was indispensable. Those meetings, whether in favour of universal suffrage or of household suffrage, proved that the great mass of the people considered that one or the other was necessary; and they demonstrated the unity of the people at large in their main purpose much more cogently than their separation by their diversity of opinion. The real question was, not what fiscal reforms had been or were to be proposed. He meant not to enter upon any censure of the proceedings of the House of Commons, for he thought this fallacy ran through the noble Lord's reasoning, not only on this occasion, but on many other occasions, that in a representative government they had only to regard what might be called the extrinsic agency, and not the power by which it was formed and fashioned. The representative agency had not only to govern the country, but it had to do it in conformity with the feelings of the people. It was a government of opinion. If all the Members of that Assembly possessed the most absolute wisdom, and if every one of their measures bore that stamp, there was still something else to be considered. They were to be the representation of the feelings, the condition—the intellectual, the moral, nay, even the physical, if you would—of those who were the constituents, or claimed to be the constituents, of those representatives. There was another question besides this, and that was, whether the millions of human beings with whom we were connected as fellow-countrymen were cherishing in their bosoms the ennobling feelings of conscious freedom, or were smarting under the irritation of evil passions, excited by being treated as only members of a slave class in what claimed to be a free country. There was no question of home or foreign policy; no relations of treaties with foreign nations; no arrangements which might open or close the doors of admission to fortunate aspirants; no question whatever of more importance to the safety and continued prosperity and glory of Great Britain, than the state of feeling among the great masses of the people of whom that House claimed to be the representatives. The propositions of the hon. Member for Montrose had many and varied bearings on the constitution; but the one practical question to his mind—the question in which he felt the liveliest interest, was this—were the working people of this country represented as they ought to be; and, if not, could they be so represented without any peril to any valuable institution? This was the question which interested him. He maintained that they were not represented as they ought to be. How did the matter stand in electoral statistics? A valuable return had been moved for in the last Parliament by Mr. Williams, then Member for Coventry, and delivered in the course of the present Session, from which it appeared that there were only 320,645 10*l.* householders; and out of these where would the industrial classes be found but in the poorest rank? The return was so arranged that it showed the number of householders occupying at a rental of from 10*l.* to 15*l.*, and then from 15*l.* to 20*l.*, and so on. It appeared from the return, that out of this constituency of 320,645 10*l.* householders, those who paid a rental ranging from 10*l.* to 15*l.* were only 99,149 persons: that was to say, that the inhabitants of houses rated at from 10*l.* to 15*l.* were only one-third of the household borough constituency. They were completely swamped by the classes above them; and when the occupiers of 30*l.*, 40*l.*, and 50*l.* houses were taken into the account, it would be found that they belonged to the higher portion of the middle classes, who could not be called working people at all. Out of the entire constituency of 850,000 persons, upon a rough calculation, only one in seventeen belonged to the working classes, and no more. He did not call that a representation of the working people—of those who made our clothing, who built our houses and palaces, who cultivated our fields, and who made, in fact, all our wealth; nor could he understand the feeling with which hon. Gentlemen could turn round and say, "You have done all this, you have created it with your strong arms; but now we tell you that you are the villeins of the soil, and that you have nothing to do with the laws but to obey them." The noble Lord said that a great many things should be done for their benefit, though the condition of a benefit was, that it should be desired and prized by the party on whom it was bestowed; and though it was most desirable to take away from the working man that incessant occasion for discontent which arose from his having no hand in the matter of legislation, and which led him to fancy that he would have done much more wisely if he had been consulted. Let the working people of this country be substantially represented, and in so doing he would not very minutely inquire into their information and acquirements, or into the amount of their deposits in the savings' banks. They were already taxed; they contributed towards the exigencies of the State; they had at least a property in their own limbs, and nervous arms; and was not that enough to mark them out for constituents—for it must be borne in mind that it was not proposed to make Members of them. It was not necessary that they should be able to unravel the mystery of the Spanish marriages—that they should be versed in the Treaty of Utrecht—or that they should philosophise on the Norman Conquest. It was only necessary that they should nominate a neighbour whom they had known all their lives, or some one who had a national reputation, as the person to whose guardianship they were willing to confide their interests. That was all the knowledge which the labouring man wanted. The knowledge and information which had been talked about, was not required by the House in other matters. By one of the clauses of the Public Health Bill, a plurality of votes was given to wealthy occupiers, upon the ground that the bill affected property. He had no doubt, however, that these persons would be found to be quite as uninformed on sanitary questions as a man in a factory would be on any difficult question on foreign politics. One of the most interesting debates on reform in his recollection was that which took place in 1822, when the noble Lord now at the head of Her

Majesty's Government brought forward a Motion on that subject in a most remarkable and impressive speech. On that occasion the noble Lord quoted a passage from Blackstone, which perhaps the House, for the sake of the comment which followed it, would allow him to read. The passage was taken from book i, chapter 2, of the *Commentaries* :—

> "1. As to the qualifications of the electors. The true reason of requiring any qualification with regard to property in voters, is to exclude such persons as are in so mean a situation that they are esteemed to have no will of their own. If these persons had votes they would be tempted to dispose of them under some undue influence or other. This would give a great, an artful, or a wealthy man, a larger share in elections than is consistent with general liberty. If it were probable that every man would give his vote freely, and without influence of any kind, then, upon the true theory and genuine principles of liberty, every member of the community, however poor, should have a vote in electing those delegates to whose charge is committed the disposal of his property, his liberty, and his life."

In reference to this passage, which the noble Lord quoted in 1822, he continued thus :—

> "We have not only one free agent, but there are in this country at least 1,000,000 of free agents—men perfectly free and independent, men who have no vote for a Member of Parliament, though they are anxious to acquire the right, and are in every way qualified to exercise the functions of electors."

On another occasion, so late as 1835, the noble Lord also said—

> "Although it is a much disputed question, yet I believe that, in ancient times, every inhabitant householder resident in a borough was competent to vote for Members of Parliament."

He would now revert to the argument used by the noble Lord in 1822, as it was the argument which he meant to adopt and apply on the present occasion. The noble Lord at that time pointed to the intelligence of the country, and to the growth of that intelligence, as a demonstration that the franchise must be largely extended. He argued, that in London there were 100 circulating libraries, and 900 in the country; and that 23,600,000 newspapers had been issued in the year preceding. He would go back, not to 1822, but to 1832, when the noble Lord realised his own views by carrying the Reform Bill; and he would assume that he then proportioned the franchise to what he held to be the advanced intelligence of the country. He could not say, however, that the facts would altogether bear him out in relinquishing the vantage ground he might have gained by the noble Lord's previous concessions. The noble Lord said there were in 1822 1,000,000 persons prepared for the franchise ; but the Reform Bill did not provide for half of that million, and they had been left unprovided for since, with a quarter of a century of wrong pressing on their minds, and depressing their spirits. While in 1832 the number of newspapers circulated was 32,000,000, the circulation had been for some time nearer 70,000,000 than 60,000,000; and as regarded societies and institutions established for the people's improvement, he would only refer to one, of which he had read an account in the papers of that morning. It was an account of a meeting of the Yorkshire Mechanics' Institution, held at Ripon, where not fewer than eighty-one societies were included and represented in that institution alone. Since 1832, 500,000*l.* had been expended by the Government on education; a much smaller sum than ought, as he thought, to have been expended on a matter of such inconceivable importance; but still that sum had been laid out, in addition to the building and support of schools from sources of private benevolence. Since 1832 there had, besides, sprung up a popular literature altogether unparalleled in extent—a literature of which our numerous magazines, the publications of the Messrs. Chambers, and the works of Charles Knight, formed a distinguished part, and which were circulated through the country to an amount altogether unexampled. One of them alone, *Chambers's Miscellany of Entertaining Knowledge*, being only one of the many publications of the Messrs. Chambers, had been issued to the extent of 18,000,000 of printed sheets; and he understood that their sales fluctuated with the state of the manufacturing districts, one-sixth of the issue being in the counties of York and Lancaster. Then, if they looked to other facts indicative of the advance of intelligence among the people at large, they found proofs multiplying all around them. It might be said that these were cheap publications to which he had referred, and that the public mind would rather be vitiated than improved by them—that their powers would be frittered away, such light reading not being adapted to mature the intellectual character; but they must remember, that all the standard works of the most celebrated authors had at the same time been cheapened; that the Essays of Bacon could be bought for 4*d.*, and the

Plays of Shakspeare for 2*s.*, and that the writings of all the philosophers who had adorned the country were circulated at the merest trifle above the cost of type and paper. It was a remarkable fact that the production of new literature had not diminished either. He found, in the history of printing, in *Knight's Life of Caxton*, coupled with the facts in *M'Culloch's Commercial Dictionary*, the number of new works published, and the average price per volume, in the four years ending 1832 and 1842. In the four years ending 1832, the new books published were 6,149, and in the four years ending 1842 they were 8,597; while the average price per volume was in the first period 11*s.* 5*d.*, and in the second period 8*s.* 9½*d.* The booksellers' circular had recently fallen into his hands, and he found from it that the number of new works last year was 3,414, and of new editions 579, while the average price per volume was 6*s.* 3¼*d.* He might refer, also, to the establishment, since 1832, of parks and places of recreation, which, though not to be used as an argument, might be taken as an indication of growing intelligence. Take, for example, the visitors to the British Museum. In 1832 the number of visitors was 147,896; last year they were 820,965. The visitors to the reading-room of the Museum, in 1832, were 31,200; last year, 67,525. Then, as regarded the economics of the working classes, they found a vast improvement. [The hon. Gentleman pointed out the great increase which had taken place since 1832 in the deposits in the savings' banks, to show the improved system of economy now prevalent; and also the great increase that had taken place in the number of public petitions to Parliament, in order to point out the growing discontent among the unenfranchised classes.] There was one peculiar fact that could not but strike every reflecting person at the present day, and that was the number of writers who were springing up among the working classes—writers who did not, like the authors of former days, rest on patrons and patronage—writers who courted no class above them, but who retained strong within them the feelings of the working class in which they had been born and bred. Nothing like this was known in former times; but in the literature of which he spoke, the fact he had stated was before them in every page. Their works were animated by a peculiar spirit—a spirit the result of the circumstances in which they had been born and bred, and the political condition of the class to which they belonged. Perhaps he should be naming authors whose names would sound strange to the great majority of those he addressed, were he to run over the list; and yet they were a class of writers whose works every legislator would do well to consult. He could not understand the state of the country unless he did consult them. They had in them the rich and racy spirit of our old English writers; and when they had the sense to avoid the conventionalities of modern authors, and follow out the dictates of their own aspirations, they indeed brought forth "thoughts that breathe, and words that burn." He might refer to Bamford, the radical author of Lancashire, whose graphic description of the sanguinary catastrophe at Manchester in 1819 the future historian would transfer to his pages, as the best record of that event. He might also speak of "One who Whistled at the Plough," whose narration of the flogging of the soldier was enough to make the flesh creep upon the bones. There was the poet Thom, of Inverury, who took shelter under a hedge, and saw his child die there, and who could give his country songs worthy of Burns; that man never knew what it was to live in a 10*l.* house. There were such men as William Lovett and Thomas Cooper. He would not ask the House to take an estimate of their literary merit and intellectual power from his questionable testimony. He would call for that of the hon. Member for Reading (Mr. Serjeant Talfourd), who, as it had been said of Akenside that he had breathed the soul of Plato into British verse, might be said to have invoked the spirit of Euripides on the British stage, and not invoked in vain; or of the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire, who had also gained laurels, though in a different field of literary exertion, and of whom it would ever be a subject of grateful recollection that, with the prompt perception of taste and with the generosity of genius, he saw and recognised the powers which were revealed in the *Purgatory of Suicides*, though written by a self-taught cobbler, and gave the author facilities for coming before the public, which might otherwise have been more difficult of accomplishment. When this whole literature was considered, from the *Corn Law Rhymes* of Ebenezer Elliot, the Sheffield worker in iron, it would be found pervaded by the spirit of indignation which would arise among men who felt themselves reduced to a slave class, threatening the disruption of that nationality the unity of which had hitherto constituted the glory of this country. The stream of mind was separated into two distinct courses; and if they did not recognise the claims of a class already represented in the noblest arena, that of their national literature, they would exhibit to the world a most deplorable spectacle; the genius of the country would become suicidal by the antagonism of its elements. Future collections of poets and historians would not be complete without the authors of those productions. They had a niche in history. They had a place among the laurelled, but they were not admissible into the society of 10*l.* householders. In all ranks, high talent and great information were the exception; but they very much misunderstood the working classes who thought that among them were not diffused the mind and the intellectual aspirations which rendered them not unworthy brothers of such as he had named; nay, which rendered them not unworthy countrymen of those great names, such as those of Milton and Locke, which constituted the brightest glory this country had yet achieved. What was the Legislature to fear? That those men should render this House a less decorous and less dignified scene? Would it be thought that those men would return from their body—still less from the refuse of that body—persons to claim fellowship here, who would turn the House aside by personalities and sarcasm from every great topic of discussion? Would they send thither men elated, not with champagne or burgundy, but with beer or brandy, to throw disorder in the midst of their business? Would they send people who would make attacks on property? Why, property—the love of it was instinctive in an Englishman. They could not propose to him a " land scheme," the hope of any portion of the soil which he could call his own, even with the most formidable chances against attaining his object, but he would make the attempt to acquire property. Nor was there any general participation in the communist opinions, which strangely enough had found their way into a document which had recently been laid on the table of the House. He had consorted with working people—not as master, as landlord, as employer, or as patron—and he had found in them that intelligence and those qualities which kept alive faith in human nature. They had the spirit of freemen. But it must be considered to what they were exposed. There was a locality which he had known for upwards of fifty years. He first remembered it with a constituency as pure as could be found throughout the length and breadth of the land. Of late it had gained an offensive name for venality; and how? Parties were kept up in the town; partisans were led to bid against one another in corporation as well as Parliamentary contests; and by keeping it before the people that their vote was always to be sold—by this mode of practical teaching—corruption was instilled into their blood. It was the tempter who ought to be the object of indignation. The briber was a thousand times worse than the bribed; and when those people did fall, there was something which ought to abate the severity of the judgment on their conduct. In the Yarmouth election, one poor man said he had never taken money before; but he was in the workhouse, and he took the bribe in order that he might liberate himself from what he thought a poor-law bastile, and consort again with his fellowmen. Another pauper who was invited by a noble Lord to take a place in his carriage and go to the poll, replied, " No, my Lord, I will walk to the poll, and will not disgrace you by riding in your carriage." The working people would not elect men of their own class as representatives unless under very strong inducements. In France, with its universal suffrage, they had chosen 38 from their own class among the 900 representatives. What would they do here? They would look to persons of local importance, to local benefactors, or else to men of national reputation. These were the men who were desirable for that House, rather than those who were unknown to the locality, or who went rambling about with their heavy purses, seeking where they could find a constituency to corrupt. Under such a system as had been presented to the notice of the House, the latter class of candidates would be found generally to fail, and there were only two classes of candidates whose claims would preponderate in the choice of the constituency. Under such a system there could be no such degrading practice of canvassing as now existed, and which only brought the poor and the rich together for mutual degradation. With large constituencies that would not exist. Men of information and talent, for whom little boroughs were said to provide seats, could more easily find their way into the House through large constituencies, without subjecting themselves to any of those degrading practices which polluted him who gave and him who received alike. It was of immense importance that they should be a united people, that they should not have a class unrepresented, whether on account of their industrial undertakings, their relations with other countries, or their internal and external prosperity. One advantage of such a subject as the present being discussed at the present moment was, that it brought the middle and the working classes into more harmonious concert than had existed for many years. It afforded a fair means of amalgamating them together, and it was for the aristocracy to consider whether they would do well in withholding themselves from that union which, with their assistance, would become the union of a threefold cord which could not easily be broken. It was not in our armaments—brilliant as were their exploits, and magnificent as were such means of defence—it was not in these that our great glory and influence consisted. It was in the indomitable energy and enterprise of the people, in the course of operations which depended on the working classes as our mainspring—it was on these that our power and safety must rest—it was from the progress of mind must come our security. Unite this class on such harmonious terms—disregard theological difficulties—spread education with a bold and free hand over the country—throw wide open the doors of the constitution—give the people an equalisation of the burdens of taxation, which surely was their right, whatever else was—do this, and they would have the millions no longer an alienated body, but the real and firm base of the social pyramid. By these means, we should achieve far nobler conquests in other countries than our armies had ever yet won; for we should bring back voluntary tribute from every clime to which our commerce penetrated—we should raise more honourable trophies, trophies not stained with blood—than we could do by the most sanguinary victories; for these measures would be the source of union with, and peaceful dominion over, other nations. Untax the population, so far as their taxation was unequal—educate the population, enfranchise the population, and then they might arm the population without a shadow of fear for the result; for if by some strange infatuation of nations we should have to encounter a hostile world, they would triumphantly roll back from our shores the world's hostility. He would only say, without entering into metaphysical speculations about natural right, but taking suffrage as the rule, and showing the cases for exception, that to accomplish all that the working classes required, the Legislature had only to do them justice; in the words of the Great Charter, "neither denying nor delaying justice." He begged of that House, therefore, justice—equal, universal justice—justice to the working people of the British empire.

Mr. DISRAELI :[*] Sir, the best answer to the animated address of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Fox) is the resolution of the Member for Montrose. The hon. Gentleman has avowed himself to-night the advocate of those whom he describes as serfs. But I cannot find in the resolution of the hon. Member for Montrose that he is prepared to enfranchise those serfs. The speech of the hon. Gentleman refers to a class of men the circumstances of whose lives, as he describes them, are, in my opinion, extremely imaginary. But whether they are real, or whether they are imaginary, no one can suppose for a moment that the project of the hon. Member for Montrose is one that at all provides the means of alleviating or of elevating their condition in the social or political scale. Whatever may be the prejudices of the hon. Gentleman against the 10*l.* elector, the proposition of the hon. Member for Montrose is not one that will enfranchise poets sleeping under hedges. That is not the proposition of the hon. Gentleman. And however comprehensive may be the sympathies of the hon. Member for Oldham (Mr. Fox), I cannot understand how, entertaining those opinions, and animated by those feelings, he can find it his duty to take so prominent a part in this debate—I mean as to the moment he has risen in it: how, with those opinions, he can avow himself the friend of a project, which would seem rather to increase the difficulties of those classes whose interests he advocates, by raising up barriers to their hopes, and which marks them out as unworthy of the new privileges which are to be accorded. With respect to the proposition itself, or similar ones, the Gentlemen who sit upon this side of the

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[*] From an authorised report published by Painter.

House are in a very different position to that of the hon. Gentleman and his supporters, or the Members of Her Majesty's Government. It is not for us, Sir, either to defend or attack the Reform Act. We obey it. When it was first brought forward, it encountered the criticism of those who were opposed to His Majesty's Ministers in 1832. Perhaps it benefited in some degree by that opposition. But when it had passed—when it became the law of the country—it received from us that allegiance which the law in this country always commands; and no doubt the remedial and practical sense of this country has prevented some of those evils which were then anticipated.

But, Sir, when I say that we neither defend nor attack the Reform Bill, I cannot myself believe that in an age like the present, when a Motion like that of the hon. Member for Montrose is brought forward, it is consistent with our duty—with the position we occupy with regard to our constituents and the country—and as the representatives of the party who originally were the opponents of the change of 1832—I do not think it is consistent with our duty that we should evade the difficulties of this debate, and some there are who think it is one not unfruitful of difficulty. Therefore I wish to take this opportunity, if the House will allow me, and at this hour, with as much brevity as I can command, to make some observations on the project which has been brought forward with so much preparation—which has been so sedulously prepared, but the true character of which I believe is not yet accurately appreciated, and which certainly seems not to be understood by the eloquent advocate we have just heard, who is prepared to enfranchise imaginary serfs and popular poets. Now, Sir, the hon. Gentleman towards the close of his address told us that he was the advocate of fiscal reform. The hon. Gentleman who introduced this project dwelt but slightly on that topic. Yet I have watched with attention, and read with an observation of no careless character, the proceedings that have been conducted by the hon. Gentleman and by his friends at the meetings they have called, and the resolutions they have offered for the consideration of those assembled: and I have always found that, on every occasion, financial and fiscal reform has been most sedulously brought forward, and that the principal plea for Parliamentary reconstruction and political revolution has always been the increase in the expenditure and taxation of the country under the system that exists; and I had occasion this afternoon to listen to a great number of petitions that were presented, and I found the same tone pervade the whole of them. The same echo had been caught by all: they all assumed the increased expenditure of the Government, and the enormous and increased amount of taxation of the country; and these were the causes—these were the pleas—at the popular meetings, in the popular resolutions, and the popular speeches, of the hon. Gentleman and the new party, that were brought forward as the basis and principal reason for political changes. I want to know what is the reason that to-night we have heard so little of fiscal and financial reform.

Now, Sir, I can easily understand why the hon. Gentleman who has just addressed the House did not dwell on that subject. The hon. Gentleman is a master of statistics, but of statistics of a different kind to those we are accustomed to in this House—very important, very interesting, no doubt—the amount of penny publications, the great increase in cheap literature, the development of railway intellect, and of all those productions you may find at the terminus or the station—circumstances in the age highly deserving of consideration, and which would not escape the observation of any sensible man. Still, these are not the statistics that touch the question of fiscal and financial reform, of which we have heard so much, and which are the real pleas, and were the popular pleas, of this movement and this new party, and which I wish to see clearly placed before the House, and before those measures for which they were the pleas are brought under our consideration. Now, Sir, I reserve to myself—with the permission of the House, and with as much brevity as I can command—I reserve to myself the right of giving my opinion upon these measures, whatever I may think of the fallacy or truth of those pleas. But I think the House will agree with me, that after all England has for months been told, that there has been in this country an enormous increase of taxation, and an enormous increase in the expenditure of the Government—told this, too, at a period of general suffering and general disturbance—told to the people of this country in order to impress upon them that there ought, as there had been changes in other countries, to be a change here, in consequence of our oppressive taxation and the oppressive expenditure of our Government —it is of some importance that, in a debate like the present, this House and the country should clearly understand whether those pleas are true or not. I give the hon. Member for Montrose and his friends the benefit of this full admission, that whether those pleas be true or not—however those circumstances may affect the position of himself and his friends in this controversy—they are circumstances which do not affect the abstract excellence or necessity of his measures.

Now, Sir, one word, then, as to the enormous increase of taxation in this country, which is the principal reason for a change in our Parliamentary constitution. I shall not at midnight refer, except by memory, to any documents; but the facts to which I refer are so well authenticated that I speak in the presence of many who, in a moment, can confute me if I make any great mistake. I take the period of twenty years ago—a little prior to the passing of the Reform Bill. The revenue that was raised in this country, in 1828, from our ordinary sources, was forty-nine and a half millions in round numbers. The same revenue raised in 1848—that is, twenty years afterwards—was forty-seven and a half millions. How is it possible, then, that the hon. Gentleman can maintain the position that taxation in this country has oppressively increased? But the revenue of 1828 was not only two millions greater from our ordinary sources—of course I omit the income-tax, which does not touch the working classes—than the revenue raised in 1848; but the revenue in 1828 was raised from a population, in round numbers, of less than twenty-three millions, while the same revenue in 1848 was raised from a population of thirty millions. Why, Sir, if you only calculate per head the burden of taxation of these two periods, you will find, I think, that in 1828 the people of England were taxed something like *2l. 3s. 2d.* a head; and, in 1848, *1l. 12s. 2d.* These figures measure the difference of the proportion borne by the annual taxation imposed by the State to the general fund out of which it is paid; and this on the assumption that the annual wealth of the country has increased in a ratio equal to the population. But we all know, and no man can be ignorant of it, for the documents are upstairs, that the annual wealth of the country has increased in a greater ratio than the population. Well then, Sir, what becomes of the plea for political change founded on an oppressive increase of taxation under the existing system? But it is not only true that taxation per head in this country in 1848, as compared with twenty years ago, has been considerably reduced in amount, but there is another circumstance of deep importance which ought never to be forgotten—that there has been a great redistribution of taxation — that the amount raised has been redistributed—and in every instance the alteration has been effected in favour of the working classes of this country. Sir, I have a return here, but I think I can trust my memory as to its results. The Customs for the years 1827 and 1847—which two years were the financial years of 1828 and 1848—the Customs of 1827 amounted to 18,000,000*l.*, and they barely exceeded 18,000,000*l.* in 1847. The Excise was 18,5000,000*l.* in 1827, and it was less than 12,000,000*l.* in 1847. The Stamps and Taxes are the same in both years; but in the Post Office, there has been a vast change and an immense reduction in favour of those classes who were suffering from fiscal oppression; so that, between the two periods of 1847 and 1827, there has been a redistribution of taxation to the amount of more than seven millions in favour of the working classes, to say nothing of the diminished burthen of the amount left from the great increase in population, in commerce, and in national wealth.

Now, Sir, I mention these facts—I think I heard somebody cry "Question!"—these are certainly not details very agreeable at past midnight; but, after all, it is the business of the case. We are told that in this country there is a system of such oppressive taxation, and of Government expenditure so enormous and increasing, that it is necessary to have reform. I do not say it is not necessary to have reform. I will enter fairly into that question. But do not let us enter upon this great question upon false pretences. The rate of our Government expenditure during the last twenty years, notwithstanding the immense increase in our population and wealth, has been almost stationary. The amount of taxation has been stationary. Well, then, the pleas for reform on these grounds are not true. The pleas that have been tonight repeated *ad nauseam* in every petition, are utterly fallacious and false. Now, Sir, I again admit, however those pleas may affect the character of those who urge them, they do not affect the nature of the measures proposed. Let us examine those measures. We are asked, in the first place, to increase the suffrage. I listened with great attention to the hon. Member for Montrose, and I certainly expected to hear from the hon. Gentleman some principle laid down upon which the franchise was to be extended, and that in asking us to consent to a great change—as far as the present argument, I am not now denying that a change may be necessary—that point I am perfectly prepared to enter into; but I say the hon. Gentleman who proposes the change, ought to lay down some principle on which that change shall be founded. The hon. Gentleman, as far as I could gather, laid down the principle that an Englishman had a right to a vote. That really was the point of his speech. He talked afterwards of not confounding constitutional rights with the rights of man; but he did not condescend to show what the difference between constitutional rights and the rights of man might be, but he said that every subject of the Queen had a right to a vote. I want to know, if an Englishman has a right to vote, why is it necessary that he should have a qualification for that vote—why that qualification should be the circumstance of living in a house? The hon. Gentleman also says every voter should be of age—of legal age. He says, a man may be called out for the militia at eighteen years of age; and, therefore, from that I infer that every man at twenty-one years of age has a right to vote. But the hon. Gentleman's illustration disagrees with his principle; because, if a man has a right to vote at twenty-one years of age, I want to know, if he is to be summoned for the militia at eighteen, why he should not be entitled to vote at that age? The hon. Gentleman talks of legal age. What has legal age to do with the working classes? And what has legal age to do with any class in the country? The commander of the escort of guards to Her Most Gracious Majesty may be, and often is, not more than eighteen years of age. The hon. Gentleman has properly reminded us that every man is bound to serve in the militia before he is of legal age; and, I believe, even school-boys must join the *posse comitatus*.

Well: bear in mind that the hon. Gentleman, in proposing this great change, has laid down no principle whatever. I myself cannot understand, if you assume an abstract right to a vote, where the line can be drawn. I observe that, in a debate that recently took place, not only in another place but in another country, on the suffrage, some ridicule was occasioned by a gentleman advocating the rights of the other sex to the suffrage; but, as far as mere abstract reason is concerned, I should like to see anybody in this House, who is a follower of the hon. Gentleman, get up and oppose that claim. I say that in a country governed by a woman—where you allow women to form part of the other estate of the realm—Peeresses in their own right, for example—where you allow a woman not only to hold land, but to be a lady of the manor and hold legal courts,—where a woman by law may be churchwarden—I do not see, where she has so much to do with State and Church, on what reasons, if you come to right, she has not a right to vote. All this proves that right has nothing to do with the matter: the very plan of the hon. Gentleman is a plan that at once disfranchises millions, even of those adult males of which we have heard so much. Other Gentlemen have stated that the suffrage is a trust. I do not wish to take refuge in that very vague and somewhat canting phrase. I do not look upon the suffrage as a trust any more than a right. It is what everything in England is—a privilege. It is created by law, as everything in England is created; and the characteristic of our society has been that it has always held out privilege, not as an odious exception, but as a general reward. This brings us to the real character of this House, and the political order of which we are the representatives. We represent the Commons; the Commons are an estate of the realm. The materials of that estate constitute, of course, a question of policy—of expediency—and it is perfectly open to anybody at any time to discuss the question of what that order should consist. It is an order, whether you make it consist of thousands, of hundreds of thousands, or even of two or three millions—it becomes an order and a privileged order; and for the hon. Gentleman to pretend that he is settling a great question for ever by proposing that every man who lives in a house should have a vote is an absurdity, because the very supporter of the Motion, on his own side, who has made an eloquent speech in favour of it, has argued throughout that there should be no limitation whatever assigned to the exercise of the suffrage.

I ventured to say before, that Gentlemen around me are not responsible for the Reform Bill. But the Reform Bill was a reconstruction of the order of the Commons—of our estate of the realm. It was a settlement most unsatisfactory to us—we offered our objections to it, and got pelted for our pains. But no one can pretend that settlement was not carried with the full support and sanction of the people of England; and if the question of its passing had been submitted to universal suffrage, there is not the slightest doubt that at the moment all would have registered their votes for the Bill. No other plan was desired or tolerated. It was to be something neither more nor less. What you wanted was not only the Bill, but the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill—and you got it. You were told at the time that the first critics of the Reform Bill would be the reformers themselves, and no prophecy ever was more strikingly fulfilled. But when there has been a settlement of a great question—concluded, too, under such circumstances—the country agitated for two years—yourselves choosing the hour of action—when you had every possible advantage — when opposition, legitimate, constitutional, and I believe national opposition, was entirely overcome by the energy and artifices of your triumphant faction—when you yourselves laid it down as a great apothegm that became a household word, that you would have it and nothing else—it is unreasonable that we, who agreed to it with reluctance, or that the Whig party, the Government of the day, who brought it forward after mature consideration, should say before we disturb the settlement then made—"Let us be sure that we are arriving at a new reconstruction that offers a fair prospect of giving satisfaction to the people and security to the State." I speak, not from egotism, for myself on this subject; for one naturally wishes, on such subjects, not to draw any one into responsibility for one's expressions. I, for one, am no advocate of finality. I conceive there may be circumstances, there may be a period, when we shall do that which we have done for five hundred years in this country—reconstruct the estate of the Commons; but I contend that the last reconstruction—and it is rather a recent one, however unsatisfactory to the hon. Gentleman and his Friends—is likely to be more satisfactory to the nation than the plan brought forward by the hon. Gentleman; and I am not prepared to support any new plan, any new change, on a subject so important, unless I believe it to be one that will conduce very greatly to the public interest. Certainly, I cannot, in the character of the present plan, discover anything that has a tendency to satisfy the public heart; because you must divest this question of all that rhetorical varnish and that powerful sentiment with which it has been suffused by the hon. Member for Oldham. This is not at all a project to enfranchise the serfs of England—this is not at all a project that tells the labouring classes they shall take their place in the political constitution of the country. It is characterised by features totally opposed to the principles laid down by the hon. Member for Oldham. If there be any mistake more striking than another in the settlement of 1832—and, in this respect, I differ from the hon. Member for Surrey—it is, in my opinion, that the Bill of 1832 took the qualification of property in too hard and rigid a sense, as the only qualification which should exist in this country for the exercise of political rights. How does the hon. Member for Montrose, the great champion of the new movement, meet this difficulty? He has brought forward a project of which property, and property alone, is the basis: he has not come forward with any scheme for an educational suffrage or an industrial suffrage—he has not attempted in any way to increase or vary the elements of suffrage. It is impossible that any plan can be more hard, more commonplace, more literal, more unsatisfactory, or more offensive, as the speech of the hon. Member for Oldham shows it must be, to the great body of the working classes, than one which recognises property, and property alone, as its basis.

Now, Sir, for one, I think property is sufficiently represented in this House. I am prepared to support the system of 1832 until I see that the circumstances and necessities of the country require a change; but I am convinced that when that change comes, it will be one that will have more regard for other sentiments, qualities, and conditions, than the mere possession of property as a qualification for the exercise of the political franchise. And, therefore, in opposing the measure of the hon. Member for Montrose, I protest against being placed in the category of finality, or as one who believes that no change is ever to take place in that wherein there has been, throughout the history of this ancient country, frequent and continuous change—the construction of this estate of the realm. I oppose this new scheme, because it does not appear to be adapted in any way to satisfy the wants of the age, or to be conceived in the spirit of the times.

I shall touch, on this occasion, but very briefly on the second point of the scheme—the ballot, which we shall have another opportunity of fully discussing. There cannot be the slightest doubt that, if you adopt this new mode of registering suffrages, you at once effect a very great alteration in the character and habits of the people. That I think a very great evil; unless called for by strong necessity : that, alone, is a strong objection to the change. I do not dwell on the practical considerations with respect to this subject, that if we adopted the ballot, we probably should not avoid the corruption and intimidation we deprecate. I will not dwell on the experience of the ancient past, or that experience which, on the other side of the Atlantic, is perpetually accruing to us. But, both with respect to the right and the manner of voting—the suffrage and the ballot—I am surprised that hon. Gentlemen opposite perpetually forget an immense element which, in the discussion of this question, ought never to be omitted, and that is the influence of opinion organised by a free press. That is the best safeguard against corruption and intimidation. You may pass what laws you like; but the ultimate means by which intimidation and corruption will be repressed is by elevating the tone of public feeling, and bringing the influence of public opinion, through the press, to bear upon the conduct of the great body of the nation. It is all folly and nonsense to say that the present age and the present Parliament are distinguished by their corrupt practices. The very reverse is the fact. All Parliaments for the last fifty years have become less and less corrupt. But it is not your laws that have made them so, so much as the increasing action of public opinion; for, even when you have passed stringent laws, you only did so when they were called for by public opinion, which desired to be expressed in the shape of a legislative enactment. Why, before the American war—a period not yet very remote—the Secretary of the Treasury used to sit at the gangway, just where the hon. Member for Devonport is now accustomed to sit, and at a stated period of the Session, the end or the beginning, gave, in the House, to the Members who supported Government, a routine douceur of a 500*l*. note; which was as little looked upon as bribery as head-money by a freeman. [A Voice : Walpole.] No, no; much later than Walpole, and quite distinct from secret bribery. It was a practice which the manners of the age and the low tone of public feeling permitted. So, you see how frivolous and unfounded are those reiterated assertions that this House is daily more corrupt, and is growing more and more so every day. The fact is, that it is becoming purer and more pure every day—inevitable in a land of progress like England, where, with a free press and a healthy action of public opinion, the undue influence of gold and property must every year and each successive Parliament be diminished.

On the third point, that of triennial Parliaments, I will touch only for a moment. Nobody will venture to maintain that the increase of taxation or the extravagant expenditure of the Government has been in any practical degree occasioned by long Parliaments. Hon. Members are well aware that, during the last twenty years, we have had on an average Parliaments of about that duration which the hon. Member for Montrose advocates. I am the less inclined to say anything against triennial Parliaments, because they are part of those old Tory principles which I have ever taken every opportunity of promulgating. Are they not ? Did not Sir William Wyndham advocate triennial Parliaments against a corrupt Minister ? They are a portion of that old Tory creed around which, I am happy to observe more than one indication, the people of this country are well inclined to rally. The only objection to the change is that it is a change, and that in the present position of affairs all unnecessary changes of this kind are to be deprecated. If I found triennial Parliaments established, I would support and retain them. But I can hardly think that any sensible man can believe that Parliaments having legally that tenure of existence, which they now possess virtually, could affect the course of our policy and legislation.

I now come to the fourth point, which is one of considerable importance—that of electoral districts. The hon. Member for Montrose entered into some details on the matter, of which I was not myself ignorant, owing to the courtesy of a Gentleman who, I regret to say, is no longer a Member of this House. I have here the manifesto of the new party on this subject. Sir Joshua

Walmsley, in the most obliging manner, placed in my hand this pamphlet, as the acknowledged manifesto of the new party. Giving me credit for that candid disposition which I hope I possess, he concluded that, after reading this important and elaborate document, I should be unable to resist the force of its arguments and its statements. I promised to give the work my most attentive consideration, and I have done so. I should have been happy to have expressed my opinion of the scheme in the public presence of that Gentleman, and thus apprised him of the result of my perusal; but unfortunately that Gentleman, who was sent here to ensure the future purity of Parliament, has from peculiar circumstances of a contrary character, no longer a seat amongst us. The hon. Member for Montrose, in speaking on this part of the question, rather beat about the bush: he fought somewhat shy of it: he first went into statistical calculations; but then he shuffled out of them, and altogether there was a confusion about his statement which showed the hand of a master in political mystification, who knows how to drape with elegance the naked truth, and when to reserve his revelations. He did not commit himself very positively to any particular view; but I have the accredited manifesto of the party here, and will take leave to call the attention of the House to it, as I think it is calculated to throw more light on the subject than the hon. Member seemed disposed to impart to it. The principle laid down in this document is what the hon. Gentlemen only hinted at —namely, that the representation of England should be founded on population. [Mr. HUME made a remark.] Exactly: population, as showing the amount of property.

I will show you how that principle works, and you can then decide as to the expediency of the practice. I must myself confess a little mortification on this subject, when the late Member for Leicester called my attention to the county of Buckingham. The county of Buckingham is here set down at a certain rated rental, and a comparison is then sought to be instituted on that head between it and Lancashire. At present Buckinghamshire has eleven Members; but, under the new system, it is to have only four. Now, I am content to take Buckinghamshire to illustrate my views. It is true that the county of Buckingham has a rated rental to the annual value only of 684,000*l.*, and that the annual value of the rated property in Lancashire is about five millions, and it only has twenty-six Members. I admit that Buckinghamshire has none of those great towns which we are told for the future are to govern England. But the county of Buckingham refused to pay ship money—the county of Buckingham carried the Grand Remonstrance; and ever since the settlement of our Parliamentary constitution in 1640, of which it was one of the main creators, the county of Buckingham has supplied this House with a series of statesmen than whom no body of men have more contributed to create the empire, sustain the renown, and cherish the high spirit of the English people. [*Laughter.*] You may smile, remembering only the uninfluential person who now addresses you; but I was thinking of those days when the county of Buckingham gave to the House of Commons Mr. Hampden and the Grenvilles, the elder Pitt and Mr. Burke. Why, even at the last reconstruction of this estate of the realm, it was the county of Buckingham that occasioned the enfranchisement of the most numerous class of the new constituency, and not the least reputable. And is it, Sir, to be tolerated that a population which for centuries has been born and bred in the memory and fulfilment of such great deeds as these, should be deprived of their hereditary weight in that free Parliament of which they were themselves among the first originators, because, if told by the head, they may not be equal to the numbers of some great town born in a day, and destined perhaps to vanish in a day? I hear a great deal in the present day about realised capital; but surely, Sir, one of the most important elements in constructing the franchise of an ancient people is the realised experience of a nation. To say that you will, by a stroke of the pen, suddenly deprive of their political position a population which has so worthily exercised its rights, is not only to say that you will bring about a revolution, but very possibly produce a civil war. But how is the new scheme to act. Now, according to the accredited manifesto of the new party—["No, no!"]—O, political ingratitude, thou art indeed a proverb! I would appeal to the spirit of the defunct Member for Leicester. [Mr. HUME made a remark to the effect that the pamphlet referred to had been printed before the party was formed.] Oh! then, it was the origin of your party! Here it is—a most important document—drawn up by Alexander

Mackay, Esq., of the Middle Temple, Barrister-at-Law. Now, let us see how Manchester is to be represented under the new constitution. Manchester is not so scurvily treated as the county of Buckingham. Under the new constitution, Manchester is to have for Members—how many think you? Seven! Only think of seven Members for Manchester! Why, Sir, from peculiar circumstances, since the days of our dreary opposition, Manchester has virtually, as far as debate is concerned, only had one Member in this House; and, Sir, as far as I am concerned, I must acknowledge it has been found quite difficult enough to keep him in order. But, Sir, if we are to have seven Members for Manchester—if there are to be seven *Richards* in the field—if it is to be expected that we are to reply to each of them, night after night, and one after another—I at once, anxious as I am to assist, and cooperate with my friends, I must plainly say that I shall retire from the arena. The energies necessary for such a contest would be colossal—worthy of the giants of the old days of Parliamentary strife—the Pitts and the Foxes. But we are not only to have seven Members for Manchester, but Liverpool and Glasgow are each to have the same number. Conceive Liverpool and Glasgow each with seven Members, and all, of course, statistical Members. Dublin is to have six Members; and, as we always have a petition against the return of a Member for Dublin, and some of our best men—my noble Friend, the Member for Stamford, among them—are now working on a Dublin Committee, there will, of course, be six Dublin Committees all working at the same time. Then, Birmingham and Leeds are to have each five Members, and Bristol and Sheffield only four. London is to be represented by forty. The new constitution distinctly lays it down that London is entitled to as many Members as the whole of the kingdom of Scotland, on the grounds of population and wealth. The only objection to the new scheme is, that when we have got the men together, the seven Members for Manchester, the seven Members for Glasgow, the forty Members for London, and their comrades, we may certainly have something called a House of Commons; but then, unfortunately, this House of Commons will probably be able neither to govern the country nor themselves. It is easy to form these plans. You may go the full tether of the hon. Member for Oldham, and have universal suffrage at once—for that is the length to which he goes. We have sufficient experience to know—recent experience—that in a country, however civilised, however powerful, however enlightened, you may elect their representatives by universal suffrage, and yet, when they are elected, the country may laugh in their face. That will happen in our national assembly which has happened in the national assembly of a neighbouring country. Sir, as it is the fashion to lay down principles, I say at once that neither in this nor in any other ancient European country can there be any such thing as government which is not based upon traditionary influences and large properties, round which men may rally. They are the only security for liberty and property. The Manchester school are always attacking traditionary influences, and intimating that it is their wish to subdivide large properties. Foreseeing, as I do, what the results will be, and convinced that, without traditional influences and large properties, you will find it impossible to govern England, I prefer the liberty we now enjoy to the liberalism they promise, and find something better than the rights of men in the rights of Englishmen.

I have now shown the House, more briefly than I could have wished, the fallacy of the pleas on which the measures proposed to-night are brought forward. I have also offered some suggestions to the House, though necessarily much curtailed, which may perhaps make them hesitate before they will agree that the measures themselves are worthy of their confidence and support. I now briefly, because the hour is very late, will endeavour to show what is the real cause of these measures being brought forward, who bring them forward, and what may be the consequences of their adoption. Nothwithstanding all the efforts of the hon. Members for Oldham and Montrose to veneer and varnish their scheme, and however dexterously they may have arranged their concessions, this is a middle-class movement—it is nothing more nor less than an attempt to aggrandize the power of that body of persons who have frankly told us that this is a middle-class Government, and, therefore, that they will take care of their own interests and their own objects. The House will not forget what that class has done in its legislative enterprises. I do not use the term "middle class" with any disrespect; no one more than myself estimates what the urban population has done for the liberty and civilisation of mankind; but I speak of the middle class as of one which avowedly aims at predominance; and therefore it is expedient to ascertain how far the fact justifies a confidence in their political capacity. It was only at the end of the last century that the middle class rose into any considerable influence, chiefly through Mr. Pitt—that Minister whom they are always abusing. The first great movement in which they succeeded, showing their power over the people out of doors, independent of Parliament, was the abolition of the slave trade—a noble and sublime act—but carried with an entire ignorance of the subject, as the event has proved. How far it has aggravated the horrors of slavery, I stop not now to inquire. I make only one observation upon it with reference to the present subject of debate. The middle class emancipated the negroes; but they never proposed a Ten Hours Bill. So much for that move. The interests of the working classes of England were not much considered in that arrangement. Having tried their hand at colonial reform, by which, without diminishing the horrors of slavery, they succeeded in ruining our colonies—they next turned their hands to Parliamentary reform, and carried the Reform Bill. But observe, in that operation they destroyed, under the pretence of its corrupt exercise, the old industrial franchise, and they never constructed a new one. So much for the interests of the people in their second great legislative enterprise. So that, whether we look to their colonial reform or their Parliamentary reform, they entirely neglected the industrial classes. Having failed in colonial as well as in Parliamentary reform—and I need not show how completely they have failed in Parliamentary reform, for the debate of this night is the perfect proof of that fact—they next tried commercial reform, and introduced free imports under the specious name of free trade. How were the interests of the working classes considered in this third movement? More than they were in their colonial or their Parliamentary reform? On the contrary, while the interests of capital were unblushingly advocated, the displaced labour of the country was offered neither consolation nor compensation; but was told that it must submit to be absorbed in the mass. In their colonial, Parliamentary, and commercial reforms, there is no evidence of any sympathy with the working classes; and every one of the measures so forced upon the country has, at the same time, proved disastrous. Their colonial reform ruined the colonies and increased slavery. Their Parliamentary reform, according to their own account, was a delusion which has filled the people with disappointment and disgust. If their commercial reform have not proved ruinous, then the picture that has been presented to us of the condition of England every day for the last four or five months must be a gross misrepresentation. In this state of affairs, as a remedy for half a century of failure, we are under their auspices to take refuge in financial reform, which I predict will prove their fourth failure, and one in which the interests of the working classes will be as little considered and accomplished.

The principle of their financial reform is to throw the burthen of taxation on what is called realised property, which they pretend is of a more aristocratic character than other property. Upon a former occasion I took the opportunity of showing the fallacy of this position. I reminded the House, that if the rental of England were equally divided among its proprietors, the average income of the holders of real property in Great Britain is only 170*l.* a year; and as there are many possessing more, so there must be many who have less. Then, with respect to another great branch of realised property—funded property—I also reminded the House that there are issued as many as fifty thousand dividend warrants for sums less than 5*l.* With regard to house property, I presume there is scarcely any Gentleman present who will doubt that the elements of that species of property must be not less democratic than those of landed and funded estates. Now, suppose a Chancellor of the Exchequer—and it would be a great feat—could transfer 10 per cent of our taxation from the multitude to what is called realised property—suppose, on the one hundred millions per annum that realised property produces, he could transfer even 20 per cent, what relief would this afford to a people suffering from the want of work and wages? How far would it tend to increase that want of work and wages? I say nothing of the justice of the arrangements, or the equitable contrivance of relieving large commercial capitals from all imposts to the State. I feel warranted in saying that their financial reform will end in the same failure that has attended all other attempts at reform.

There is one more point to which I must advert before I sit down, and that is the source from which this movement springs. The noble Lord has expressed his belief that this is not a popular movement—that it has not a great array of supporters out of doors; but then the hon. Gentleman the Member for Montrose tells us to look at the petitions. But he assures us, at the same time, that they are all the consequences of a declaration made by the noble Lord that the people of England did not require this reform. Up to that point the Member for Montrose admits that the people had been silent. Surely, the people of this country are not accustomed to wait to express their opinion, till it may chance to be elicited by some captious expression of a Minister of the Crown. The hon. Member for Montrose, in this respect, proves a little too much. It would have been more frank and instructive if he had told us how these petitions and these movements are managed. I must do it for him. In consequence of the organisation and agitation of the middle-class that has gone on of late years, a new profession has arisen in this country. An hon. Gentleman the other night said that diplomacy was going out of fashion. Possibly: there are people who think lawyers useless, and make their own wills: there are others who think doctors good for nothing, and take quack medicines; and there may be Ministers of State who think that they can dispense with the services of ambassadors and envoys. But those who are interested in finding employment for the rising generation need not be alarmed—a new profession has been discovered which will supply the place of the obsolete ones. It is a profession which requires many votaries—chairmen, deputy-chairmen; secretaries, committee-men, missionaries, pamphleteerers, lecturers, hired orators—

> "Rhetor, grammaticus, geometres, pictor, aliptes,
> Augur, schenobates, medicus, magus."

The business of this profession is to discover or invent great questions. When a great question is settled, it is the ruin of the profession. There is no need for a chairman, for there is no chair to fill—no want of a deputy-chairman to represent his hon. Friend—there are no committees to be attended—no pamphlets to be written—the lecturer is idle, and the orator is dumb. The rule, however, is, when a great question has been settled, immediately to look out for a new one; yet to find a new great question is often the most difficult thing in the world. The profession like a new great question to loom in the distance before the old one is quite safe in port. Unfortunately for the profession, the right hon. Member for Tamworth at one stroke suddenly curtailed their last labours. After the great question of free imports, which they call free trade, was carried, the profession were at fault: they were flushed with triumph, but hungry for new prey. The hon. Member for the West Riding, like a wise man, left them in the lurch and went abroad. Unfortunately for him, he returned a little too soon. However, he brought back a great question with him: and the profession were beginning to work perpetual peace when unfortunately occurred a state of general war. It was a terrible mistake: however, the hon. Member for the West Riding is a man of real talents, and he will get over it—in time. It was impossible to proceed with the perpetual peace plan after the unhappy affair at Paris—so it was shelved; and then this fortunate pamphlet happened to turn up. Electoral districts was a new cry, and served to flavour the somewhat stale pretexts of triennial Parliaments and vote by ballot. People who live in the country know little of what is going on except from the newspapers; and, seeing accounts of the public meetings that have been going forward, they have naturally thought there must be something rotten in the State; but I can assure them the matter is managed with the utmost caution and finesse — like delicate artists they feel their way. Popular enthusiasm requires some cultivation. I will show you, on the authority of the journal that is the avowed organ of the "New Movement," how dexterously and with how much prudence a national demonstration is cockered up:—

> "REFORM MOVEMENT.
>
> "The New League Movement in Manchester.
>
> "It is well known that the Anti-Corn-Law League Rooms in Manchester have been occupied, since the dissolution of that body, as the place of occasional meeting for most of the gentlemen who took part in the great Anti-Corn-Law struggle."

Why, did we not always hear that the great

Anti-Corn-Law League was entirely confined to that single object? But it seems that after their success they have been meeting there ever since—not knowing what to do).

> "Newall's buildings—the *locus in quo*—have already become memorable, and their site will, in future days, be traced with scrupulous fidelity by the local historians. Their celebrity promises to be heightened by fresh movements for popular freedom by the men who contended for and gained commercial liberty. A gathering of some ten or a dozen of the old batch of free-traders took place there, as we have already stated, on Thursday evening; and amongst those who took part in the proceedings were Mr. Cobden, Mr. Bright, Mr. Kershaw, and Mr. J. B. Smith. Mr. George Wilson, chairman of the Anti-Corn-Law League, presided on the occasion. The meeting was private, and the proceedings, of course, preliminary; but strong opinions were expressed in favour of household suffrage, vote by ballot, triennial Parliaments, and equal electoral districts. It was ultimately agreed that a circular, signed by the chairman, should be forwarded to all the supporters of the free-trade movement, and that when public opinion should have been obtained on the points under discussion, a more decided measure be taken for appealing to the people at large."

The circular adopted on this occasion was as follows:—

> "Newall's-buildings, Manchester, April 27.
>
> "Dear Sir—A number of gentlemen have met here here to-day to consider what steps should be taken to promote a cordial union of all classes of reformers in favour of an improvement in our system of Parliamentary representation. They feel that the increasing expenditure and increasing taxation are causes of the deepest anxiety, and they doubt the possibility of any permanent remedy being applied whilst the taxpayers are for the most part excluded from direct influence in Parliament.
>
> "I have been requested to address this circular to you, to ascertain how far you think the extension of the franchise to all householders—with the protection of the ballot—the more equal distribution of the electoral power by means of electoral districts—and the shortening of the duration of Parliaments to a period not exceeding three years—would afford a system of representation such as the middle classes, now partially enfranchised, would generally acquiesce in, and which the unenfranchised classes would accept as a substantial admission to their legitimate place in the constitution.
>
> "I shall be glad also to know whether you think that at the present time a movement is desirable in favour of the changes I have indicated, and if you are disposed to co-operate with an association founded for the purpose of promoting them. I shall be glad also to know what—so far as you have ascertained—is the prevailing feeling of the inhabitants of your town or district on the subject to which I have referred.
>
> "The replies to this circular will not be published, and I will thank you to favour me with an answer at your earliest convenience."

This circular bears the signature of a gentleman, whom I will not call distinguished, for that would be prostituting an epithet—and whom I will not call notorious, for that might be offensive—and whom therefore I will describe as the well-known Mr. George Wilson. The newspaper goes on to say—

> "A very few weeks will now determine whether the country is to have a new league, more formidable than the former one, inasmuch as it will gather within its fold many sects and parties who stood aloof from the Anti-Corn-Law League in the early stage of its operations."

Now, I have shown the House, without exaggeration, quoting merely their own documents, the manner in which this thing is brought about. It is factitious—it is not popular. Let me not be misunderstood—let it not be said that I am opposed to popular feeling when I say this. No: it is the same movement that has given you colonial, Parliamentary, and commercial reform, and now proposes to give you financial reform. It is the same movement that has always resulted, by their own confession, in disaster and disappointment. But the remarkable circumstance is this—that the present movement has not in the slightest degree originated in any class of the people. Even if the people be misled, it is possible that there might be a popular movement and yet erroneous; but this is erroneous and not popular. But the moral I draw from all this—from observing this system of organised agitation—this playing and paltering with popular passions for the aggrandisement of one too ambitious class—the moral I draw is this—why are the people of England forced to find leaders among these persons? The proper leaders of the people are the gentlemen of England. If they are not the leaders of the people, I do not see why there should be gentlemen. Yes—it is because the gentlemen of England have been negligent of their duties, and unmindful of their station, that the system of professional agitation, so ruinous to the best interests of the country, has arisen in England.

It was not always so. My hon. Friends around me call themselves the country party. Why, that was the name once in England of a party who were the foremost to vindicate popular rights—who were the natural leaders of the people, and the champions of everything national and popular; and you must blame yourselves alone if you have allowed the power that has been entrusted to you by the constitution to slip from your hands, to be exercised for other interests than the general good of your country. When Sir William Wyndham was the leader of the country party, do you think he would have allowed any chairman or deputy-chairman, any lecturer or pamphleteer, to deprive him of his hold on the heart of the people of this country? No, never! Do you think that when the question of suffrage was brought before the House, he would have allowed any class who had boldly avowed their determination to obtain predominance, to take up and settle that question? Read what Sir J. Hynde Cotton, in the days of Walpole, said on the question of the suffrage? He was one of the greatest Gentlemen in the country: he did not run away every night from the House and pair till half-past eleven, and let the country go to the dogs. If it be true that we are on the eve of troublous times—if it indeed be necessary that changes should take place in this country—let them be effected by those who ought to be the leaders in all political and social changes. Then we shall not find changes carried into effect for the unblushing purpose of securing a middle-class Government, but an English and a national Government, the pride of the people, and in which confidence can be placed. Then, if you are called on to make changes, it will be in your power to make them within the scope and according to the spirit of the English constitution; because, notwithstanding the sneers of the hon. Gentleman and his Friend to-night, I am not ashamed to say that I wish to maintain the constitution; and I do not mean, by the term constitution, merely the House of Commons, and still less a particular party in the House, which some hon. Gentlemen opposite seem always to consider the English constitution. But I would effect these changes, if necessary, according to the spirit of the constitution: it is a capacious spirit—it will allow you to do all that is required, and yet maintain the institutions of the country. And indeed, Sir, I would maintain that constitution, not merely because it has secured to us the benignant sway of an ancient monarchy, mitigated in its operation by the co-ordinate authority of popular estates—not merely because it has planted English liberty broadly and deeply in the land, and not made it a thing dependent on the breath of an individual, or the caprice or passion of some great city —not merely because it has secured to us the due administration of justice, safety of person, respect for property (though these are all considerations doubtless of vast import)—but I would maintain that constitution because I firmly believe that, of all existing polities, it is that system which most tends to secure the happiness and elevate the condition of the great body of the people.

Debate adjourned.

House counted out at Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, June 21, 1848.

Minutes.] Petitions Presented. By Mr. Henry Berkeley, Mr. Milner, and other Hon. Members, from an Immense Number of Places, in favour of an Extension of the Elective Franchise.—By Mr. Tatton Egerton, from Members of the Baptist and Methodist Congregations, at Great Warford, in the Parish of Alderly (Chester), for Better Observance of the Lord's Day.—By Mr. Gladstone, from Sir James Thomas Claridge, Knt., of 21, Albert Street, Regent's Park, praying the House to take his Claims into Consideration.—By Mr. Moody, from the Board of Guardians of the Taunton Union, for an Alteration of the Law respecting Mendicants.—By Mr. Cardwell, from James Aikin, Merchant, of Liverpool, against a Repeal of the Navigation Laws.

BOROUGH OF CHELTENHAM.

Mr. STAFFORD rose to move—

"That Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a New Writ for the electing of a Burgess to serve in this Present Parliament for the Borough of Cheltenham, in the room of Sir Willoughby Jones, Baronet, whose Election has been determined to be void."

He had to express his regret that the majority of the House differed from the opinions he strongly entertained with reference to the issue of writs for the boroughs at present unrepresented. He found, by the latest population returns, that the total population of the boroughs from which they withheld writs was 147,103, and the number of registered electors 10,122; and having done this injustice to the constituencies of the country and to their fellow-subjects, were they, without repairing it, about to decide on a question of so much magnitude as that which related to the colonies? It was a remarkable thing that, while it required the consent of that House, of the other House, and of Her Majesty, to disfranchise a single borough, the refusal of writs enabled the House of Commons to disfranchise the constituencies of the kingdom. Previous to this Session, it it was a matter of privilege, within the power of any Member, to move for a writ without any previous notice; but in the present Session, a resolution was passed that, in certain cases, one day's notice of the intention to move for a writ should be given. He did not complain of the arrangement that had been made, but objected that, in addition to that, any hon.

Member might take three or four writs, and, assuming them to be under his own particular patronage, appoint a distant day for the moving of those writs, and express surprise that any other hon. Member should interfere between him and that cluster of writs. It was perfectly obvious that if such a precedent were established, any Member—a creature of the Government, or belonging to the Opposition—having a particular object to subserve, had nothing to do but to take certain writs under his protection. He called attention to the report of the Committee on the Cheltenham election, and submitted that it was impossible to conceive any election made void for slighter reasons than were given in that report. The report was made on the 28th of May; Cheltenham had therefore for three weeks been without a Member; and he put it to the House whether such a large and important place ought to be for any longer time deprived of its representation? The House must see that, however reasonable or just it might be to postpone the issuing of those writs in April, at the latter end of June it was unjust and unreasonable. He felt so strongly the importance of this subject, and the injustice they were permitting, as also the exceeding inconvenience and danger of bringing into the House those questions concerning elections which, in the case of election petitions, they were so anxious to keep out of the House, that no remonstrance should prevent him from bringing the subject under the consideration of the House.

Mr. MOWATT hoped that before they came to a decision on the question, they would have some explicit declaration on the part of the Government. He had hitherto invariably voted in opposition to the proposition of the hon. Gentleman on the other side, thinking there should be an investigation into the cases brought under the consideration of the House; but at the same time, he felt they were every day getting into a more and more perplexed position. He hoped before the House went to a division, they would have some explanation from some Member of the Government. If he did not, he should vote for the Motion of the hon. Gentleman.

Sir GEORGE GREY had been asked as to the course which Government intended to take on this subject. He could give no answer to the question. He believed it was the duty of each individual Member, upon a question of this kind, to follow his own course; and certainly, as a Member of the Government, he had done so with reference to matters of this kind. The question before the House was whether they should issue a new writ for the borough of Cheltenham. He begged the House to recollect that this case stood on different grounds than that of Leicester and other boroughs, with respect to which the Committee had taken special reports. He was not aware before he came down to the House this Motion was to be brought forward to-day; but he had since referred to the proceedings of the Committee on the Cheltenham election. The Committee reported in the general and usual terms, that Sir Willoughby Jones was not duly elected to serve in the present Parliament for the borough of Cheltenham—that it was a void election—and that Sir Willoughby Jones had by his agents been guilty of bribery. The report then stated that three cases of payments of sums of money had been proved for alleged services, but which services never had been performed; and the report concluded by stating it did not appear Sir Willoughby Jones was cognisant of this bribery, or that it had taken place with his consent. It appeared, then, that there was no special report with regard to Cheltenham; but with regard both to Derby and Leicester, the reports were special. With respect to the Derby writ, although the Committee had reported that bribery had taken place, he had voted for the first Motion for its being issued. He did so, because he thought it was an objectionable proceeding to omit issuing a writ, until some steps were taken to procure a legislative measure for instituting inquiry into the practices at elections at that place. The House had decided against the view he had taken of the question, and had determined that the writ should not be issued then. After this he did not think it would be right for him or any other Member to set himself up against the opinion of the House upon a matter of this kind, decided as it was by a large majority. Since the House decided upon that question, the hon. Baronet the Member for Flintshire had obtained leave to bring in a Bill instituting local inquiries into the practices at elections at that and other places. His noble Friend at the head of the Government said he was willing to give every facility to the hon. Member for Flintshire to proceed with his Bill, and for that purpose had given up to him two nights set apart for Government business. The manner, however, in which this measure had been met on the other side, was such as to hold out little or no encouragement to adopt such a proceeding for the future. Still every assistance should be given consistently with the progress of important public business. With respect to this case he repeated he saw no ground for opposing the immediate issue of the writ, as no special report had been presented by the Committee alleging the existence of general bribery.

Sir JOHN HANMER was sorry to hear some of the expressions which had fallen from the right hon. Baronet, as he (Sir J. Hanmer) thought that the suspencion of these writs was a sort of recognisance entered into by that House, that they would proceed with the inquiries as proposed by his Bill. [Sir G. Grey: Cheltenham was not named in the Bill.] The reason of that was, that the Committee on the Cheltenham election had reported since the Bill had been brought forward; but the hon. Member for Montrose had given notice of a Motion to include Cheltenham in the Bill. He was of opinion that the House should adopt as an invariable rule, that whenever a place was reported upon for corrupt practices, a local inquiry should be instituted. He thought this should be the necessary consequence of the report, and there should in all instances be an investigation into the electoral condition of the place reported upon. He was alive to the evils which must arise from the suspension of writs without the fullest consideration. Nothing could be more unconstitutional; but in certain cases, like those which had recently occurred, he conceived the House was bound to suspend them. This proceeding was by no means unusual, and the noble Lord at the head of the Government had mentioned several instances of the kind which occurred in the reign of William the Third; but he (Sir J. Hanmer) could mention a case which occurred in the time of Charles the First, when Parliament was laying "the foundation of our constitutional liberties." The circumstances were simply these:—A contest arose, in 1628, as to whether the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal or the Speaker of the House of Commons should issue writs in cases of vacancies in seats during the Parliamentary recess. Such a case then occurred, and the Lord Keeper issued a writ for the election of a new Member for Hertford; but the House, on its meeting, took up the question, and declared that the election was void, and suspended the issuing of the writ for an indefinite period, because they thought that a great constitutional question was at issue. He thought this matter should not remain in its present condition, but that some general practice should be adopted by which local inquiry would be instituted in every case in which the Election Committee alleged corruption had prevailed.

The House divided:—Ayes 59; Noes 47: Majority 12.

List of the Ayes.

Adderley, C. B.
Anstey, T. C.
Berkeley, hon. Capt
Bowles, Adm.
Boyd, J.
Boyle, hon. Col.
Carew, W. H. P.
Christy, S.
Clive, H. B.
Crawford, W. S.
Cubitt, W.
Dalrymple, Capt.
Deedes, W.
Denison, J. E.
Drummond, H.
Du Pre, C. G.
Elliot, hon. J. E.
FitzPatrick, rt. hn. J.W.
Fuller, A. E.
Galway, Visct.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Hamilton, G. A.
Hamilton, J. H.
Hayes, Sir E.
Henley, J. W.
Herbert, H. A.
Hobhouse, T. B.
Humphery, Ald.
Jones, Capt.
Lewis, G. C.
Mackenzie, W. F.
Maher, N. V.
Maitland, T.
Melgund, Visct.
Mulgrave, Earl of
Newdegate, C. N.
O'Connell, M. J.
Pakington, Sir J.
Palmer, R.
Patten, J. W.
Pusey, P.
Rice, E. R.
Sandars, G.
Scrope, G. P.
Sibthorp, Col.
Sidney, Ald.
Slaney, R. A.
Smith, rt. hon. R. V.
Smollett, A.
Somerville, rt. hn. Sir W.
Stanley, E.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Talfourd, Serj.
Towneley, C.
Trollope, Sir J.
Verney, Sir H.
Vesey, hon. T.
Willoughby, Sir H.
Wilson, M.

TELLERS.

Stafford, A.
Goring, C.

List of the Noes.

Bruce, Lord E.
Burke, Sir T. J.
Clifford, H. M.
Currie, H.
Divett, E.
Duncan, G.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Duncuft, J.
East, Sir J. B.
Estcourt, J. B. B.
Evans, W.
Fagan, J.
Fitzroy, hon. H.
Fortescue, hon. J. W.
Greenall, G.
Hall, Sir B.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Hastie, A.
Headlam, T. E.
Hood, Sir A.
Jackson, W.
Kershaw, J.
King, hon. P. J. L.
Macnaghten, Sir E.
Marshall, W.
Milner, W. M. E.
Mowatt, F.
Mullings, J. R.
Norreys, Sir D. J.
Pechell, Capt.
Pendarves, E. W. W.
Perfect, R.
Pigott, F.
Pilkington, J.
Pugh, D.
Ricardo, O.
Robartes, T. J. A.
Smith, J. B.
Strickland, Sir G.
Stuart, Lord D.
Thicknesse, R. A.
Thompson, Col.
Wawn, J. T.

Williams, J.	TELLERS.
Wood, W. P.	Evans, Sir De L.
Wyvill, M.	Thompson, G.

TENANTS-AT-WILL (IRELAND) BILL.

On the Order of the day for going into Committee on the Tenants-at-Will (Ireland) Bill,

Mr. HENRY DRUMMOND was aware that there was another Bill before the House, which, as far as the name went, was nearly the same as the one now under consideration; but the object of the two Bills was entirely dissimilar. The Bill to which he wished to direct the attention of the House was entirely confined to cases of tenants-at-will who had already expended money. The Bill of the right hon. Gentleman, on the other hand, was entirely prospective, and had nothing whatever to do with the object of the present Bill. He therefore, thought he could not do justice to the question, nor to the Irish people, if he abstained at the present moment from going into the discussion. He had some amendments to move in Committee; but he should not mention them now, because the present discussion would be upon the principle, and not the details, of the Bill. He was not surprised that Irish Gentlemen, looking at the whole of the circumstances which had been brought under the notice of the House in the various reports, should be in perfect despair when they attempted to effect any real benefit for the people of Ireland. At the same time, it might be some consolation and encouragement for them to remember that, although the proportions of good and evil were indeed different, nothing essential had taken place in Ireland which had not within his memory taken place in this country, and which by the exertions of those who had acted on sound principles had not been in a great measure remedied. It was necessary that English Gentlemen should understand that the words "landlord and tenant and labourer," did not in Ireland mean the same thing as here. [*A laugh.*] Gentlemen smiled, but he had proofs before him of everything he asserted, and he found it stated in a report delivered only that morning that in Ireland the terms "farmer and labourer" were synonymous. The fact was, that the labourer in Ireland did not live upon wages; and the consequence was, that he was compelled, in order to live at all, to give promises—no matter for what amount — to obtain possession of land, whether he meant to pay the money or not. The land was the thing on which the people lived; and how came that to pass? It came to pass because the country was deluged with more people than there was capital to employ them. The English Parliament had been the means of calling this mass of pauperism into existence. When the Legislature began to do justice to the Roman Catholics of Ireland, they enacted measures which he could not better characterise than in the words used by Mr. Leslie Foster the last time he spoke in that House, when he said that they were "measures which provided for the exclusion of the aristocracy, the power of the mob, the ascendancy of the priests, and content to none." The landlords having no longer any more necessity to use the 40*s*. freeholders had discarded them from their lands, and pulled down the houses. The priests, by the present system of the Church, were compelled to live upon the marriage and other fees they received from the people, which was contrary to ecclesiastical law. They had no right to one of these fees; and if the Irish landed Gentlemen, and particularly the Irish Roman Catholics, did their duty, they would explain the law to the people, and let them see how the priests imposed upon them. He repeated, that the Legislature, by their conduct towards the Roman Catholics, had driven the priest to be supported solely by these unlawful means; and, at the present moment, the oppression which they were feeling was infinitely extended. In consequence of the existing distress a vast number of their flocks had been brought into the union, where they were fed, but not paid. They received no money, and therefore could give none to the priest; consequently he was deprived of his usual means of subsistence. There was a class very little better than those, and who were in as great distress. From those he could not receive anything, and he was therefore driven to what he called the rich of his flock, though they were nothing but little shopkeepers, upon whom fell not only the enormous burden of the rates, but also the support of their ministers. There was another very remarkable thing with respect to Ireland, which was the immense number of beggars, who lived not upon the rich but upon the poor. It was a circumstance peculiar to Ireland, and increased the distress very much. As to any claims of the priests to the superior charge of their flocks, they were not well founded; and he would mention one striking fact, In Mayo there were 143 places of burial, of which only 18 were enclosed, 29 were entirely open, and the other 96 were partly so. The flocks were in fact neglected by the priests, save in those cases where they could derive profit from attending to them. The enormous demand for land had not only enhanced it beyond its true value, but had made it exceedingly difficult to know what the value was. If it were like anything elsewhere, what it would fetch in the market, these people would give anything for it, and that was what was called tenant-right. With respect to the tenants-at-will, he admitted that there never was, properly speaking, the feudal system established in Ireland. But he contended that both in Scotland and in Ireland, there had been cottagers from time immemorial fixed upon the land, who held, by the continuance of occupation, their titles to their estates, as well as those who owned the castles; and it was a monstrous abuse of the rights of property to hold that a man had the same power over hundreds and thousands of acres of unenclosed moors as any Gentleman in that House had over his own kitchen garden. But those freeholders had been removed from the land by what was called the clearance system, without anything being given for their freeholds. Persons had been dispossessed who had claims on the land, though their titles could not be proved by a parchment deed. Even an Irish Chancellor had said that the law of landlord and tenant in Ireland was such, that a landlord of straw could grind a tenant of iron to powder; and whilst every law enacted for this country had been to shield the tenant from the oppression of the landlord, in Ireland they had been made the instruments of strengthening the landlord against the tenant. It was useless to suppose they could alter such a state of things without very strong measures. In the report of the Earl of Devon it was stated that, unlike England and Scotland, where the landlords built houses for their tenants, in Ireland the tenant built his house for himself. Now, the measure which he (Mr. Drummond) proposed was in accordance with that report, and it provided that every person who should be ejected should receive from his landlord the value of the house he had built. It was, he was aware, but a very slight measure, and he also admitted that but little could be done by legislative interference in proportion with that which might be done by the gentlemen connected with Ireland. Very strong charges had been made against Irish landlords; but he believed them to be monstrously unjust if to the definition of a landlord in Ireland they gave the same meaning as in this country. For instance, he saw that Dr. Higgins said that the landlords of Ireland were, almost without exception, an utter disgrace to humanity. That was not the declaration of a Saxon Parliament, but of a genuine Milesian, W. O. Higgins. He knew that a great amendment had taken place with respect to the residence of Irish proprietors of late years; but still great abuses existed; and he would refer to the testimony of Lord Sligo, who, in a letter which had been published, stated that in some parts of Ireland, to which he referred, many persons had subscribed to dispensaries for the mere purpose of obtaining the county salary for the physician, and that they then insisted on the physician who was appointed refunding the amount of their subscriptions, or attending their families for nothing. The continued cry from Ireland was, that the clearance system might not go on, and he had proposed this as a practical measure to meet the evil. Seeing, then, the continual imposture on the people of Ireland, of Conciliation Hall, costing them 2,000,000*l.* a year, the dearest amusement, he believed, ever undertaken by a people, seeing the unexampled patience with which they suffered their afflictions, and seeing too the series of mistreatment to which they had been subjected on all sides, whether that House exempted themselves and the present generation or not, he trusted the House would allow this Bill to go into Committee, that the Irish people might receive from their hands that justice and consideration which they could receive from no other; "for (said the hon. Member) they have none to help them but God and you."

MR. S. CRAWFORD thought it right, before the question of going into Committee was put, that the House should perfectly understand what was claimed from the House by this Bill. He would, however, in the first place, call the attention of the House to the numerous meetings that had taken place in Ireland connected with the subject of the tenant-right, because he believed that the public press of London had entered into a sort of combination to suppress the accounts of those meetings. He had seen no notice of them in the journals of this country, and thereby hon. Members of that House had had no opportunity of being made acquainted with the feelings of the people of Ireland on this subject. Tenant-right associations had been established in all parts of Ulster, and a general meeting of these associations had been recently held at Dungannon, attended by between 18,000 and 20,000 persons, at which resolutions were come to that they would not cease to agitate until they had obtained a measure of tenant-right. Similar meetings had been held at other places at which resolutions to the same effect were agreed to. They required that tenant-right should be secured by law, and no proposition that did not go to that extent would be accepted by the tenantry of Ulster as a settlement of this question. He gave the hon. Member for Surrey the highest credit for his intentions; but he wished that hon. Gentleman to understand that this Bill would not be satisfactory to the people of Ireland. By the second clause it was provided that if a landlord proposed to eject a tenant, he should either pay him some compensation for the money the tenant had given for the land, or should grant him a lease for fourteen years; but he (Mr. Crawford) did not think that the landlord should be made responsible for the amount a tenant might have paid for his holding, as sometimes most extravagant amounts were paid by individuals. Under the tenant-right system the tenant looked to a lease as a security against a rise of rent, but he also expected that at the expiration of a lease he would not be turned out without some remuneration; he looked upon himself as part proprietor with the landlord in the land, so far as he had increased the value of it by improvement. He had always admitted that there were many good landlords in Ireland; but there was also abundant evidence to prove that the general treatment of the tenants by the landlords of Ireland had been most oppressive. Captain Kennedy, a Government inspector, describing the state of things in the Kilrush union, said that he had seen many instances of the industrious man being compelled to pay exorbitantly for his improvements. A great many were tenants-at-will, and dared not resist; and a practice prevailed upon some estates of serving upon the tenants a notice to quit every six months, in order that they might be more completely in the power of the landlord. It was impossible to keep a country in a state of order and prosperity in which such things were done. It had been thought by some that the granting of leases would be a sufficient substitute for tenant-right, but it was clear that short leases would be no adequate substitute. Suppose a man having ten acres of land spent 200*l.* or 300*l.* in improvements; it was clear that a short lease would be of no value to protect that person from oppression. The people of Ireland would not now accept the Bill which he had formerly proposed; their demands were immensely increased by the denial of justice, and they would not now be satisfied except by a full measure in accordance with their demands. The Bill brought in by the Government was perfectly inadequate and valueless to the tenants of Ulster, and indeed of any other part of Ireland. A much greater concession of justice must be passed before the people of Ireland would be satisfied. He agreed with the hon. Gentleman the Member for West Surrey in thinking that there were more people in Ireland than capital wherewith to employ them. And why was that? Because there was no security for improvement. There was capital in Ireland, but it was withheld from the soil because there was no security whatever for the value of the money so laid out. It was said that Ireland was destroyed by the smallness of the holdings, but he denied that assertion. The true cause was the want of security, because in the north, where that security was found, and there were small holdings, peace and prosperity existed. He would vote for going into Committee on the hon. Gentleman's Bill; but he trusted the hon. Gentleman would be induced to admit such improvements into the Bill as would render it more acceptable to the people of Ireland.

Lord CLAUDE HAMILTON: As there is a Special Committee at present sitting on this most important subject—a Committee composed of most intelligent Gentlemen, who, for many weeks, have devoted themselves to its examination, and have obtained a large amount of valuable evidence, I think it is hardly treating this question with the respect it deserves to introduce this Bill before the Committee have made their report, or printed their evidence. I should not, however, have addressed the House if the Member for Rochdale had not, on this and former occasions, assumed that he was the mouth-piece of all Ulster, and arrogated to himself the exclusive right to repsesent the views of the people of that province. Now, Sir, I beg to tell him that I consider this a somewhat singular assumption on his part, seeing that the province returns a considerable number of Members, and that he, in spite of frequent attempts, has been unable to secure any one of those seats. Now I have the honour to represent a very large county in that province, and I deny the correctness of his statement, that the tenantry of Ulster feel a great alarm upon the subject of tenant-right; and simply for this reason, that they know that they are quite safe in the permanent enjoyment of it. It is perfectly true that the hon. Member has travelled about the country organising an agitation in favour of his own Bill, and endeavouring to create insecurity and distrust where they did not prevail before. But what was the basis of that agitation? Why, a wholesale misrepresentation of the landowners of that province. He assumed that they had some subtle scheme to deprive the tenantry of their just rights, and he endeavoured to instil into their minds this poison—that their interests were in danger. Now, Sir, I deny that there exists any intention or wish on the part of the landlords to infringe on the existing tenant-right of Ulster. I live amongst, and in familiar intercourse with, both the landlords and tenants of the county I represent, and I have never seen any such intention on the one hand, or alarm on the other. If anything so wrong, and I will add so foolish (for it would certainly fail), were to be attempted, I would most strenuously oppose it; but really the hon. Member displays so much misconception on the whole subject, and exhibits such inconsistencies in his facts, that he is not qualified to give a second opinion on the question. Just now he stated, that in Ulster, even where there were small holdings, such was the security felt, owing to the existence of tenant-right, that perfect order, contentment, and good will prevailed; which he contrasted with the anarchy and crime that prevailed in other counties where tenant-right did not exist. Well, if his testimony is worth anything, the House would naturally conclude that Ulster was happy, contented, and quiet. Presently, however, when he is bewailing the loss of his own absurd Bill, he tells us that, perhaps, his Bill might have allayed the universal alarm, distrust, and discontent that prevailed in Ulster; but that now, the indignation created by the rejection of his Bill was so great, the tenants would not now take such terms, and had since made much larger demands. He even ventured to hold out some kind of threats as to what might happen if the great irritation was not speedily calmed. My reply to these characteristic inconsistencies is, that the hon. Member is as ignorant of the existing social condition of the province as he is of the opinions of its inhabitants. I must not be understood as stating that the tenantry of Ulster are indifferent to tenant-right. Far from it. What I state is, that they are not the authors of the agitation now going on upon the subject. The hon. Gentleman has pursued the usual course on such occasions. There are hired orators and secretaries—these, making use also of the repeal agitation machinery, go about to meetings and obtain signatures to petitions which have been previously prepared, and are all exactly in the same words, probably written by the hon. Gentleman himself. These petitions are then paraded about as if they emanated from and represented the feeling of the great mass of the respectable, hardworking, and intelligent farmers of Ulster. Now I will give an example of this. We have heard his description of the recent meeting at Dungannon. He has charged the English press with endeavouring to suppress what he terms "the magnificent spectacle of the tenant-right meeting at Dungannon, where 20,000 tenants met to express their sentiments." Now, Sir, unfortunately for the hon. Member, I happen to represent the county where Dungannon is situate, and I venture to assert that such a representation is the greatest delusion that ever was attempted to be palmed on the credulity of the House. There never was so shallow an attempt to conceal a repeal agitation under the cover of a tenant-right association. I cannot understand how the hon. Member would have felt himself justified in uttering such a misrepresentation, for he might easily have verified his statement. I will give the House a more correct description of that meeting, derived from the county paper—the *Tyrone Constitution*—and from private sources of undoubted accuracy. The chairman was, I believe, a retired Navy surgeon. The head orator was a Londonderry newspaper editor—the second orator was a petty sessions attorney, who is head of the repeal club at Dungannon. He, I believe, was secretary to the meeting. There were barely 4,000 persons present. No influential farmer took any prominent part in the proceedings, and very few tenants were to be seen in the crowd. This is the magnificent meeting of the wealthy and intelligent farmers of all Ulster. The meeting was universally deemed a failure in the neighbourhood, as were others held at different places under similar auspices. The hon. Member does not know the tenants of Ulster as well as I do; and I can tell him that if they really thought that their privileges were likely to be infringed, and their rights taken away, they would not require the petty machinery of the hon. Member's agitation to protect them. They are a sturdy and very intelligent people, very well able to defend their own interests, and to understand their own rights. They don't want the hon. Member's teaching as to what their rights are, or how they are to be maintained; and when I state my conviction that they do feel no alarm, it is because I know their confidence in their own strength and resources, if any one was so unwise and so unprincipled as to strive to assail them; and I must again remind the House that there is a broad distinction between the present agitation and the real merits of the tenant-right question. It is the organised agitation that I designate as mischievous. I really should have thought that even the hon. Gentleman would have known that the people of Dungannon were able to defend themselves without his aid. I consider that Dungannon is somewhat classical in this respect. It has made itself a name in history by its declaration of independence, and determination to uphold its rights. It does not require external promptings as to its interests, or the labours of itinerant spouters to teach the inhabitants their duty. I consider the conduct of the hon. Member as most mischievous, as he has inspired doubts where perfect security existed before. In opposing this Bill I do not wish in any way to diminish the power of tenant-right—on the contrary, I wish to see it permanent, as it has been for so many years. But the only really dangerous attack it has received has been from the hon. Member himself. He insists upon meddling with it, and moulding it into some legal form, and defining it by technical phrases. In this attempt he has overlooked the great peculiarities of the custom. In each locality it is well understood; but the practice differs materially in different places, so that the attempt to square it into some legal shape has endangered many local customs, and thrown a general doubt upon the expediency of a practice which it is found so difficult legally to define. But I am obliged to the hon. Member for one thing. I know his love for notoriety—how grateful to his feelings is the incense of flattery at public dinners. Well, he went on a tour of popularity hunting, and, amongst other places, he presided at a dinner at Londonderry. At that dinner the real nature of the agitation, and the ulterior views of its authors, became manifest; and it opened the eyes of the farmers, who soon saw how foreign to their interests were the real motives of the agitators. I said the farmers of Ulster were intelligent and industrious—I must now add that they are honest and conscientious. Before that dinner they did not understand the nature of the agitation, and they thought there really must be some plot hatching against their interests, so that they were lending a willing ear to those who styled themselves defenders of the tenant-right; but when they saw that, under the mask of that name, demands were made, and claims put forth, which they knew were never included in the tenant-right system, they withdrew from the agitation; they honestly said—No, we will not demand what we know in our consciences we never thought were included in the tenant-right. For instance, the "unlimited power of sale to the highest bidder," and the right to have a Government valuation as to the amount of rent—these were never in Tyrone considered as part of the tenant-right system. One word more, Sir, and I have finished with the hon. Member. He has accused the press of a conspiracy to prevent his eloquent speeches and his magnificent meetings from being known to the public. I presume this is a Saxon conspiracy, that prevented the 20,000 tenants at Dungannon from being duly paraded before the public. The fact is, the press knows the real meaning and the true value of such meetings a great deal better than the hon. Member. They acted as honest men, who understood the character of these tenant-right meetings, and knew that they were got up to cover another and most mischievous agitation.

Mr. W. FAGAN said, the noble Lord had not the least justification for the attack he had made upon the hon. Member for Rochdale. The hon. Member was one of the largest landed proprietors in the province of Ulster, and upon his own property he practically carried out the principle of tenant-right, which he wished the House to adopt. The hon. Member for Rochdale was justified in saying, that the province of Ulster was in alarm concerning tenant-right; but he was glad that the hon. Member for Rochdale did not oppose the Bill going into Committee; for although it was not adequate to meet all the evils, yet there was a deal of good in the Bill. There was an excellent provision which placed poor-rates and grand-jury cess on the landlord in all cases where the tenantry were at will; it would force the landlords to do that which, apparently, they were not inclined to do, namely, give leases to the tenantry. If this Bill became the law of the land, there were several provisions which would induce the landlords to change the system, or, at all events, to take off from the tenantry a great portion of the severe burdens which now oppressed them.

SIR W. SOMERVILLE thought that the House had been led away from the Motion of the hon. Member for West Surrey, by the address which the hon. Member for Rochdale had thought it his duty to make; he would therefore call the attention of the House briefly to the Bill of the hon. Gentleman. He had been in hopes, considering that there was a Committee sitting upstairs, and considering the provisions of the Bill introduced by Government, which, to a certain extent, were retrospective, that the hon. Gentleman would have responded to the appeal made to him by the Secretary of State, and have consented at present to postpone his Motion for going into Committee. But what was the effect of the second clause? If the House should agree with him in opinion as to the effect of that clause, it would be hardly necessary to deal with any further provisions of the Bill, but they might consent at once to the Motion to go into Committee this day six months. The effect of the second clause was, that the landlord was not to take possession until he had paid the tenant whatever sum he had paid in obtaining the occupancy of the farm. That was, in so many words, forcing the landlord in Ireland to purchase his property over again. Conceive a landlord who had been receiving a moderate rate of 6*s.* an acre, under a long lease, which was a case of common occurrence: the lease dropped; he found that the farm, which had originally been an entire farm, was cut up into 100 or 200 portions; the tenants fall into arrear, he asks for possession; how do they act? Every one of them produces a piece of paper, claiming compensation for improvements. What an inducement to fraud—what an inducement to immorality! because, if this Bill passed, the landlord was not to get possession till he had repaid the expenditure. He said, that that was neither more nor less than making the landlord purchase his estate over again—one of the most monstrous propositions that ever was propounded. It did not alter the real principle of the Bill if every one of these sublettings could be proved; it would be just as monstrous as if the whole farm had been handed over. There was now a Bill before the House for the sale of encumbered estates. What was the use of the House losing time in passing a Bill for the sale of encumbered estates, if they passed such a Bill as this? A man buys an estate in Ireland at twenty-five years' purchase, and the tenant shows him a piece of paper telling him that he is to pay twenty years' purchase more. It had been said that there would be no peace in Ireland unless the House sanctioned the principle of the tenant-right. What that principle was he had never been able to understand. He had seen a letter written by Mr. Laman, the secretary of one of the meetings, in which it was stated that from the nature of the Ulster tenant-right, and the difficulty of ascertaining what it was, it was impossible to legislate. The hon. Gentleman who spoke last had approved of the clause in this Bill transferring the payment of the county cess, in cases of tenancy at will, from the occupier to the landlord. That might or might not be a good provision, but it would be a provision which should form part of some Bill having reference to the grand-jury law. He was sorry that his hon. Friend had thought it necessary to produce such a Bill; but as it was produced, he hoped the House would coincide with him. He moved that the House go into Committee this day six months.

MR. P. SCROPE said, that there was another party to this question besides the landlords, and that was the party of the tenants. If the House would only consider what the condition of the tenants was, they would not wonder at the insecurity felt by the tenants of Ulster, or the dissatisfaction they felt at the present state of things, or their desire to have their interests put on a more permanent footing. The tenants might be dispossessed, by a short notice, of property that had been held by them for generations—property which had been looked upon as creditor and debtor property. They found that they held that property entirely at the mercy of the landlord. They had become aware of the insecurity on which they held it, and were desirous that it should have a legal foundation. In spite of the statement of the noble Lord as to the feelings of Ulster, he was inclined to believe that the feeling was of a stronger character than the noble Lord was willing to admit. The opinions of the hon. Member for Rochdale were becoming prevalent in Ulster; the tenants would no longer be content to hold their vast amount of property on so uncertain a foundation as the kindness of the landlord. Some landlords had for many years past broken down this tenant-right by degrees; the tenants felt that they might lose it altogether, at all events they were liable to be dispossessed of it by degrees. The noble Lord had said, that it could not be taken away, because universal insurrection would be the consequence: but was that the tenure on which the Legislature would wish an immense amount of property to be held? In this country a feeling ought to prevail in the Legislature that the rights which belong to any portion of the industrious classes should be sanctioned by law. The customs which had prevailed in Ulster for centuries past was similar to the copyhold customs in England, which had been settled by law, and the tenants of Ulster only made a reasonable demand in asking to be placed on the same footing. The hon. Member for Rochdale was justified in calling upon the House to sanction the principle of the legislation of tenant-right in Ulster. He believed this to be a question upon which the pacification of Ireland, and the security of England depended. It was the immigration of Irish poverty which was driving the population of this country to a state of misery. He maintained that Ireland had ample means of supporting her own population; and he implored the House, as they felt for the tranquillity and safety of the empire, to take into consideration a measure of this description, which would tend to enable the Irish to live at home. There was another branch of the subject upon which he desired to say a few words. He alluded to the hardships inflicted upon the small farmers by their wholesale eviction from their holdings. He wished to ask the right hon. Baronet below him in what stage the Bill for the better protection of evicted tenants in Ireland, which he had introduced before the holidays, now stood? He considered that it was most desirable that that Bill should pass with as little delay as possible, and that some check should be placed upon the disgraceful scenes which were, he was sorry to say, of almost daily occurrence: houses were levelled, and families had been turned adrift; and he repeated there could be no subject more worthy than this of the attention of a humane and Christian people. He trusted, before the Session terminated, that a measure satisfactory to the people of Ireland would be passed; for as long as the present state of things existed, there would be security for neither property nor life.

Mr. HERBERT, in illustration of the ignorance which English gentlemen laboured under with regard to the real nature of the case of Ireland, stated that lately an English secretary came over to that country. It appeared that he had received a letter from a gentleman in Drogheda, and his first question upon arriving in Dublin was, where is Drogheda? Now he believed that if the hon. Member for Stroud did them the honour to visit Ireland, his first question would be a similar one. He desired the House to recollect, that in Ireland, were land put up for sale, that the highest rent would be offered without the slighest reference to the value of the property. Such was the morbid passion of the people to obtain possession of land. By this proposed Bill the landlord would be compelled to pay for what was anything but an improvement—for what, in his opinion, was absolutely the reverse. And if the hon. Member would buy an estate in the south of Ireland, he would find many improvements made; and if he came over with the benevolent intention of paying for all such improvements, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred he would return with his money in his pocket. In proof of the mischievous effect of agitation upon this subject, he had only to refer to the statement which had been made, that now the people would not be satisfied with that amount of tenant-right which would formerly have satisfied them. He did not think that he could, with any propriety, vote upon the question, should it come to a division, as he was a Member of a Committee upstairs to which a similar measure had been referred. And if English Members would come down and attend that Committee, they would see that Irish landlords were quite willing to grant all that was fair and just.

Colonel CONOLLY condemned the interference of the hon. Members for Stroud and Rochdale as most pernicious, and as most productive of dissatisfaction. Since this agitation, the demands of the people had become most unreasonable. He was bound, for the security to property, to denounce in the strongest terms the course which these Gentlemen were pursuing. He had no doubt that they were actuated by the most benevolent motives. He, for his part, did not object to paying for what real improvements had been made; but what he objected to was, the restrictive character of this Bill; and persons who were desirous of the enlargement of their farms should not be prevented from carrying out their views by the cocking up of a pigsty, which would be then denominated an improvement.

SIR G. GREY rose in consequence of a question which had been addressed to him by the hon. Member for Stroud. He would take the opportunity of stating that the observation of his right hon. Friend, which had been so much commented upon, namely, that such a provision would subject the proprietors to repurchase their estates, only referred to the second clause of the Bill. He was surprised to see such a Bill in the hands of the hon. Member for West Surrey (Mr. Drummond), who had upon a previous night so eloquently denounced the French proposition, *Toute propriété est volée.*

MR. C. ANSTEY considered the principle of the Bill as most valuable, and suggested that they should go into Committee *pro formâ.*

Amendment agreed to. Committee put off for six months.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORS BILL.

House in Committee on the Parliamentary Electors Bill.

On the 1st Clause—

> " No person required an order to be placed on the list of voters to pay any rate or taxes except those payable on October 11 of preceding year."

MR. FORBES opposed this measure as tending to make an important innovation on the Reform Bill, and as being a virtual repeal of the ratepaying clause.

SIR DE LACY EVANS apologised for the measure being rather a homœopathic dose of reform, than, as the hon. Gentleman seemed to think, an important innovation on the Reform Bill. His bill only proposed to extend the time for the payment of rates.

The Committee divided on the question that the clause stand part of the Bill:— Ayes 58; Noes 47: Majority 11.

List of the AYES.

Baines, M. T.
Bernal, R.
Boyd, J.
Bunbury, E. H.
Callaghan, D.
Crawford, W. S.
Dalrymple, Capt.
Davie, Sir H. R. F.
Divett, E.
Drummond, H.
Elliot, hon. J. E.
Evans, W.
Fagan, J.
Ferguson, Sir R. A.
FitzPatrick, rt. hon. J.
Fordyce, A. D.
Forster, M.
Fox, W. J.
Grenfell, C. P.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Henley, J. W.
Henry, A.
Herbert, H. A.
Hill, Lord M.
Hobhouse, T. B.
Howard, hon. C. W. G.
Hume, J.
King, hon. P. J. L.
Lacy, H. C.
Langston, J. H.
Maher, N. V.
Maitland, T.
Marshall, W.
Milner, W. M. E.
Mitchell, T. A.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Perfect, R.
Pusey, P.
Rice, E. R.
Russell, F. C. H.
Rutherfurd, A.
Sandars, G.
Scrope, G. P.
Somerville, rt.hn.SirW
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Stanton, W. H.
Stuart, Lord D.
Sullivan, M.
Talfourd, Serj.
Thicknesse, R. A.
Thompson, Col.
Thornely, T.
Townshend, Capt.
Trelawny, J. S.
Turner, E.
Williams, J.
Wilson, M.
Wood, W. P.

TELLERS.
Evans, Sir D. L.
Pechell, Capt.

List of the NOES.

Adderley, C. B.
Arkwright, G.
Barrington, Visct.
Benett, J.
Bourke, R. S.
Bruce, C. L. C.
Bunbury, W. M.
Burrell, Sir C. M.
Carew, W. H. P.
Christy, S.
Cole, hon. H. A.
Dodd, G.
Dundas, G.
Du Pre, C.
Farrer, J.
Galway, Visct.
Gaskell, J. M.
Gooch, E. S.
Goring, C.
Granby, Marq. of
Grogan, E.
Gwyn, H.
Hornby, J.
Hotham, Lord
Ingestre, Visct.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Keogh, W.
Lewis, rt. hon. Sir T. F.
Mackenzie, W. F.
Macnaghten, Sir E.
Manners, Lord C. S.
Masterman, J.
Miles, P. W. S.
Miles, W.
Napier, J.
Neeld, J.
O'Brien, Sir L.
Patten, J. W.
Prime, R.
Richards, R.
Seymer, H. K.
Stafford, A.
Stephenson, R.
Thompson, Ald.
Trollope, Sir J.
Villiers, Visct.
Waddington, H. S.

TELLERS.
Conolly, Col.
Forbes, W.

House resumed, and adjourned at Five o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, June 22, 1848.

MINUTES.] *Took the Oaths.*—Several Lords.

PUBLIC BILLS.—1^{a} Public Health; Appeals on Civil Bills (Dublin).

2ª Certificates for Killing Hares (Scotland); Game Certificates for Killing Hares; Criminal Law Consolidation (No. 2); Copyhold Enfranchisement Extension.

Petitions Presented. From Dumbarton, and a great Number of other Places, against the Marriage (Scotland) Bill, and the Registering Births, &c. (Scotland) Bill.—From Dufftown, for Facilitating the Attainment of Sites for Churches in Scotland.—From Peterhead, against any Alteration of the Navigation Laws.—From Aberdeen, for Revision of the Excise Laws.—From Dunbar, complaining of the Inadequacy of the Remuneration of Schoolmasters in Scotland.—From Runcorn, and other Places, against the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on the Sabbath.—From Saffron Walden, for the Adoption of Measures for the Suppression of Seduction and Prostitution.—From Members of several Lodges of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Manchester Unity, for the Extension of the Provisions of the Benefit Societies Act to that Order.—From the Parish of Kenilworth, against the Admission of Jews into Parliament.

SPAIN—DISMISSAL OF SIR H. BULWER.

Lord STANLEY said, that he wished to ask a question with reference to the recent communications between our Government and that of Spain; he would enter into no discussion upon the merits of the case, but confine himself to a statement of so much of the correspondence as would make his question intelligible. After the Spanish Government had taken the very strong step—a step so strong as, in his judgment, hardly to be capable of entire vindication under any circumstances whatever—of dismissing Her Majesty's Minister from Madrid at very short notice, they must have been aware that that step must necessarily be regarded with great jealousy, and probably with great indignation, in this country; and they hastened to remove the impression it would produce by sending over the Count Mirasol upon a confidential mission to explain to the British Government the circumstances under which that step had been taken, and to vindicate, if possible, their own procedure. He arrived on the 25th of May; but the noble Lord the Foreign Secretary, whether correctly or incorrectly, came to the conclusion that it was his duty not to receive any communication through the Count Mirasol, and he informed the Spanish Minister in this country that if the Government of Spain had any communication to make to the British Government, he (the Spanish Minister) was the proper channel through which it was to be made. In a private note of the 29th of May to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, M. Isturitz stated that, in consequence of this determination of the British Government, it would be his duty to transmit to them himself the statements of which the Count de Mirasol was the bearer; and two days afterwards Lord Palmerston inquired when the communication would be made; but M. Isturitz then replied, that in the circumstances in which he was placed, he did not feel himself fully authorised to present those communications with which another person had been charged, and that he could not take upon himself to make them. On the 6th of June Lord Palmerston in consequence addressed to M. Isturitz a letter, of which the following was the concluding portion:—

> "Her Majesty's Government cannot acquiesce in a course of proceeding so disrespectful to the British Crown. If the Count Mirasol has brought any statement which it is fitting that the Government of Spain should submit for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, in explanation or in justification of the conduct pursued towards Her Majesty's Minister at Madrid, Her Majesty's Government are entitled to call upon you as the official and accredited organ of your Government at this Court, to make that statement, and to send it to me in writing forthwith.
>
> "I now formally and officially call upon you to do so; and it is my duty to add, that if you do not do so within two days after the date of this letter, Her Majesty's Government will deem themselves entitled to assume that Count Mirasol has brought no statements or explanations which are in the slightest degree deserving of consideration; and that the Spanish Government in sending him hither had no serious or becoming purpose in view; and I have further to say, that as no statements can be admitted by Her Majesty's Government except those on which the Spanish Government acted at the time, no supplementary statements which may hereafter reach you from Madrid can be received, nor can be taken into consideration by Her Majesty's Government in forming their final judgment on this important matter."

On the next day, the 7th, M. Isturitz sent to Lord Palmerston an answer, which concluded thus:—

> "This mission, which the Gentleman intrusted with it would have been able fully to execute as he might have thought proper, might have been considered by Her Britannic Majesty's Government a sufficient satisfaction or otherwise; but, without perverting intentions and words, never, at any possible period, could it be called a proceeding disrespectful to the British Crown, since, on the contary, it was expressly intended by the Spanish Government as an act of consideration and just respect called for by the circumstances in which it originated. Motives, on which I abstain from passing any judgment, determined your Excellency not to receive the Count Mirasol, without your Excellency being able to know, officially, whether he came with a diplomatic character or not—a quality, however, which was not rigorously indispensable for the fulfilment of an honourable and friendly mission. However that may be, the refusal of your Excellency, and the approaching departure of the Count Mirasol from England, have already disposed of this question, to which it has been attempted to give undue importance, and your Excellency will find me prepared to follow out the principal question in the fulfilment of my duties. No one so much as myself deplores the

present state of the relations between the Government of Her Catholic Majesty and that of Her Britannic Majesty; and I will not allow an opportunity to pass without expressing my desire to bring it to an early and satisfactory termination. I have nothing to add now to what I have already written to your Excellency upon this question, except that I am prepared to receive your replies or your resolutions. If at a later period, if during the sojourn which I may have to make in this capital, my Government sends me communications to transmit to your Excellency, I shall transmit them; and your Excellency will use your discretion in receiving them or in rejecting them, as appears to be indicated in the concluding paragraph of your Excellency's communication of yesterday, the 6th, to which I have replied to-day, the 7th, before the term fixed in the unusual intimation contained in it."

The reply of Lord Palmerston, dated the 12th, went into an elaborate examination of the communications which he had received, and the noble Lord intimated that under the circumstances M. Isturitz would do well to quit this country forthwith. In consequence of that intimation, he did quit, on the 14th inst., without having delivered to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs the papers explanatory of the act of the Spanish Government, which had been thus sent over by a confidential agent, who had been despatched with such anxiety that not a moment should be lost that he arrived here, as he (Lord Stanley) believed, before Sir H. Bulwer. Her Majesty's Government had laid the correspondence on the table as being closed; but he (Lord Stanley) believed that M. Isturitz had not left this country twenty-four hours before a despatch from Madrid arrived, giving him instructions to communicate to the British Government the papers intrusted to Count Mirasol, and also forwarding additional papers. Apart from diplomatic etiquette it would certainly seem that a knowledge of these communications was necessary for a full consideration of the merits of the case, and in order to enable Parliament and the country to form a just estimate—he would not say of the question whether the Spanish Government were justified in dismissing our Minister, but—whether they had fair reason to believe that his conduct was a departure from the ordinary functions of a Minister in a foreign country, and that he was intriguing for the purpose of overthrowing the existing institutions of Spain—a belief which would go far to remove part of the offensive character of the very strong step they took in removing him. There appeared, however, to be considerable difficulty in presenting to Parliament the papers upon which the question turned. He wished to ask, whether the communication intrusted to Count Mirasol had been subsequently tendered by the Spanish Minister here, or the Secretary of the Embassy, or any other person, to the British Government, and received by them; and whether, if so, it would be laid before Parliament?

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE said, he would abstain, like the noble Lord, from going into the merits of the case, and that after diplomatic relations between this country and Spain had ceased, no further communication was received from the Embassy, or could be received.

Lord BROUGHAM said, that as diplomatic relations had ceased, they could not be in a fair position to judge of the conduct of Spain.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE said, that the Spanish Government had had an opportunity of stating their case, and had abstained from doing so.

The Earl of ABERDEEN considered that Parliament could not, in this state of things, and with the imperfect statement laid upon the table, pronounce any judgment upon the question, but must wait for that information which Her Majesty's Government had declined to receive, but which he presumed the Spanish Government would take means of communicating to the world.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE said, that Parliament had not yet been called upon to pronounce any opinion upon the subject.

CRIMINAL LAW CONSOLIDATION (No. 2) BILL.

Lord BROUGHAM moved the Second Reading of this Bill. It would on Saturday next be thirty-two years since an address was presented to the Prince Regent by both Houses of Parliament, praying His Royal Highness to appoint Commissioners to digest the statute law of this country. Although thirty-two years, however, had elapsed since that time, no legislative measures had been adopted on this important subject. There were some persons who were anxious for reforms in the law, but who would not be satisfied with any reforms that might be proposed: while there were others who were opposed to all reform, and who seemed to think that the law of England was almost perfect. For his own part he was in favour of well-considered and slow—because sure—reforms in the law; for he desired so to amend the law of England that it might be not only almost but altogether perfect. In asking their Lordships to give this Bill a second reading, he proposed to refer to a Select Committee, and he intended to lay before that Committee a digest of the reports of the Commissioners who had collected information on this subject. He did not propose to proceed with the Bill in the present Session, and therefore ample opportunity would be afforded during the long vacation of considering its provisions.

The LORD CHANCELLOR was glad that his noble and learned Friend proposed to refer this Bill to a Select Committee, as it related to a subject upon which many different opinions existed, and one which required serious consideration.

LORD CAMPBELL also expressed his entire approval of the course taken by his noble and learned Friend. He thought, however, that if his noble Friend had communicated privately with the Judges, and with other persons conversant with this subject, he might have brought his Bill to something like perfection before he had submitted it to the House. If the noble and learned Lord persevered in the course upon which he had entered—if he introduced a comprehensive and beneficial reform in the law of this country—he would, like another great man, go down to posterity with his code in his hand.

The EARL of POWIS said, he wished to call their Lordships' attention to a very important provision in this Bill. Among the clauses relating to offences against the Queen's person, not amounting to high treason, there was one providing that any dean or chapter who should refuse the election as bishop of a person named in a letter missive, or any bishop or archbishop who should refuse to proceed, in a certain number of days, to the consecration of such person, should be guilty of an offence under that Bill, and should be punishable by imprisonment for a period not exceeding three years, or by fine, arbitrary and unlimited, or by both. He considered that, if a person holding ecclesiastical dignity felt it his duty, under certain circumstances (which they would easily conceive might arise, as such instances had already occurred), to refuse election or consecration to any individual who might be appointed to the office of bishop, such a person should not be stigmatised as an offender against the Queen's person, or classed with Chartists. He thought the interests of the Church required that this subject should be carefully considered, and with a seriousness consistent with the importance of the question.

LORD BROUGHAM rejoiced to see the earnestness and zeal with which the noble Earl had taken up this subject; but he might be allowed to observe that zeal was more valuable when it was accompanied by knowledge, than when it was dissociated from it. Now, as the law at present stood, any dean and chapter, or bishop, acting as the noble Lord had described, were liable to what was termed in law the penalties of *præmunire*—to forfeiture of lands and tenements, goods and chattels, and to imprisonment during life. But the purpose of his (Lord Brougham's) Bill was to abolish *præmunire* in this case altogether, and to diminish the punishment to imprisonment for three years. The Crown really appointed the bishop, but there was still preserved an absurd ceremony, whereby the deans and chapters were called upon to elect a person as to whom they had no choice; and in all cases all opposers of his election were called upon to appear, and if they did appear they would not be heard, and if they did not appear they were declared contumacious. He thought that as the Crown in fact appointed the bishop, it would be much better that the Crown should do it in form as well as in substance.

LORD DENMAN said, that the proposed alteration was very favourable to deans and chapters, and other ecclesiastical persons, who might under the present law incur the penalties of *præmunire;* but he must say that he hoped this would be taken out of the criminal code altogether, and that the power of appointing the bishops would be vested directly in the Crown.

The EARL of ELLENBOROUGH observed, that though the Crown were to appoint directly, yet the archbishop must consecrate, and then the difficulty, which it was suggested might be avoided by the direct nomination of the bishop by the Crown, might arise.

LORD DENMAN said, the election and consecration of bishops were ministerial not judicial acts. It was a direction to the archbishop. Certain questions were asked by the archbishop, and when they were answered he was bound to proceed with the ceremony.

Bill read 2^a, and referred to a Select Committee.

Committee named.

COPYHOLD ENFRANCHISEMENT EXTENSION BILL.

The LORD CHANCELLOR moved the Second Reading of this Bill. It professed to deal only with certain particular circumstances connected with copyhold tenure, which, in the present state of the law, made that species of property less productive than it might otherwise be, both to the tenant and the lord, and less beneficial to the community at large. Their Lordships were aware of the great difficulties and inconveniences which beset copyhold tenure in many respects; and he would advert to those particular cases to which the present Bill referred. The Bill professed to deal with the following manorial rights, viz., the rights to fines, rents, heriots, and all other payments and renders, periodical or casual, in money or otherwise, the lord's right to timber, the lord's right to enter for forfeiture by reason of waste, and all his other rights in respect of the commission and permission of waste, and provided that they might be commuted by the copyhold commissioners on the application of a tenant, according to the mode of proceeding set forth in the Bill. The customary claims for heriots also made it necessary that some such measure as the present should receive the sanction of Parliament. The claims on account of the value of timber likewise demanded the attention of the Legislature; he would put the case of a well-timbered estate—it might possibly be an estate good for nothing else than the production of timber, and if held of the lord of the manor by a copyholder, the tenant could not touch the timber, neither could the lord; and by that state of the law the timber on the estate was rendered utterly useless. It was surely not fitting that the law should in that respect at least remain unaltered. That which they were, then, called upon to do, and that which the Bill went to effect, would be to create out of copyhold property an estate of full value, giving due compensation both to the lord and the tenant. Suppose, for example, that there was an estate, the existing value of which was 15,000*l.*, the tenant's interest being worth 10,000*l.*, the lord's worth 5,000*l.* Let them suppose that estate enfranchised, and rendered thereby worth 20,000*l.*; he did by no means propose that the augmentation of value, being 5,000*l.*, should go either to the lord or the tenant—what he should propose was, that they should participate in the benefits of the increase. Further, it was proposed that compensation should be given to the parties interested, not only for what they possessed, but for that which they might reasonably expect to possess—the power of making such compensation being limited by the value of the property. There was one other topic to which he wished to refer before he sat down, and that related to the steward's fees, which generally varied in different manors; provision, as far as possible, should be made to meet this difficulty, but he hoped without injuriously interfering with vested rights. He trusted it would be found that the Bill sufficiently dealt with this part of the subject. He had only to add, that it was proposed to give the tenant the right of building without losing the benefit of his expenditure, and, as much as possible, to facilitate fair and fitting improvements. These were the principal outlines of the measure, and, having laid them before their Lordships, it was not necessary that he should any further trouble the House.

The MARQUESS of SALISBURY admitted the necessity of amendment in the law, but doubted that the present Bill would correct the existing evils. The Bill, he thought, would not be satisfactory either to lords of the manors or to copyhold tenants; whilst its direct tendency was to destroy the copyhold tenure—in many respects a convenient one—throughout the country. The noble and learned Lord had complained of the hardship of the heriot fine, which operated as a heavy tax. With regard to this objection, and that the incidents of the copyhold tenure obstructed improvements, it was sufficient to say that much of the land in agriculture, constantly improved, was copyhold; and that cottages were built upon copyhold land—and why? Because, whilst it was practically equal to freehold, it was less expensive. The noble Marquess enumerated various objections to the Bill; but his speech was very imperfectly heard. His Lordship moved that the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

LORD BEAUMONT said, it appeared to him that, by the Bill as it stood, lords of the manor were not fairly treated. They had, at present, a certain protection against copyhold tenants, in respect to nuisances upon land, which protection the Bill, as it stood, took away, without the slighest compensation. The compulsory commutation was not entirely reciprocal; the tenant might compel the lord to commute, but not the lord the tenant. The lord of the manor should—as he had at present—in case of an application for commutation by a tenant, have the option of purchasing out the whole of the copyhold tenure before the tenant could enforce a commutation. He did not draw the same inference as the noble Marquess from the increase of buildings upon copyhold property; it often arose from necessity. The fine upon the death of a copyholder was claimed at a time when the family were least able to pay it; and the fines sometimes occurred in such quick succession as to reduce a family to indigence. With regard to the mode of commutation, whether fixed fines or rent-charge—there was not much difference between them—it should be so regulated as to secure the interests of both parties.

LORD REDESDALE thought the principle of the measure dangerous in itself, but still more so on account of the arguments by which it had been sustained. He contended that the present system had worked well, and that it ought not to be altered by reason of a few extreme cases of hardship.

LORD CAMPBELL defended the Bill, which he conceived to be necessary to do away with an unnecessary odium upon a particular tenure. Glancing at the history of copyhold tenure, the noble and learned Lord showed the successive ameliorations by which the grievances under which copyholders laboured had been removed, and argued that the compulsory enfranchisement of copyholds would be beneficial to lords of manors as well as to other parties affected by the Bill.

The EARL of HARROWBY said, that the feeling of the country was universally opposed to the existing system. He should, therefore, vote for the second reading of the Bill, and should consider in Committee any objections which might be offered to the details.

LORD STANLEY said, that the Commissioners had recommended compulsory commutation, but not compulsory enfranchisement. Under a system of compulsory enfranchisement poor copyholders would be obliged to take a more expensive tenure, and pay a sum of money for taking it, without receiving an equivalent advantage. It appeared to him that the proposed alteration would be productive of more injury and inconvenience than could fairly be attributed to the existing system. The Bill was uncalled for and unnecessary, for voluntary commutations were making satisfactory progress. If the noble Lord pressed his Amendment to a division, he would vote for it, because he thought the Bill unjust, unnecessary, and mischievous in principle.

LORD ABINGER thought that it was best to leave these rights to be gradually abolished by voluntary commutation.

The LORD CHANCELLOR was understood to express a hope that the House would read the Bill a second time, and it could then be amended in Committee.

On question that the word "now" stand part of the Motion, House divided:—Content 31; Not-content 16: Majority 15.

Resolved in the *Affirmative.*

Bill read 2^a.

EVICTED DESTITUTE POOR (IRELAND) BILL.

Order of the Day for the further consideration of the Amendments, moved on report, read.

LORD MONTEAGLE had no objection to a Bill for making a fair and just provision for the relief of evicted destitute persons; but that object could be better carried out than in the manner here contemplated. He should propose that the notice required by the Bill in case of an ejectment should, instead of being a vague notice giving the names of the lands, specify the name of every tenant to be evicted; and that, instead of being sent by post to the guardians of the union, it should be given direct to the relieving officer, who would be close by, and in possession of funds to relieve with at once. In nine cases out of ten in Ireland, ejectments were brought, not to obtain possession of the premises, but to compel payment of rent; and the rent being paid, no dispossession took place. To require notice to be given in all cases, and to be given to the board of guardians, would tend to excite animosities needlessly. The 1st Clause of this Bill provided that all writs of ejectment executed during the winter should be served a certain time before sunset; and he intended to propose that these writs should be served in the same manner as all other law processes, between sunrise and sunset. He also entertained objections to the 5th Clause. Under the existing law, it was necesssary that notices should be served on all individuals residing upon land before such individuals could be served with writs of ejectment; and if one occupier was omitted, he might at once, by his affidavit, put an end to the whole proceedings. But by the 5th Clause of this Bill, it was proposed that notices should be required to be served upon persons entering on the occupation of property after writs of ejectment had been served on the previous occupiers; and in case of failure or neglect, penalties were imposed. He considered this a most objectionable provision; for these changes of possession might be made for the mere purposes of fraud. He therefore begged to move that the House be put again into Committee on the Bill, in order that he might have an opportunity of proposing Amendments to meet these objections.

The MARQUESS of CLANRICARDE said, as the Amendments suggested by his noble Friend would affect the character of the Bill, he had no objection to its recommittal, in order that those Amendments might be considered, and that, if necessary, the sense of the House might be taken upon them.

Agreed to. House in Committee.

The Earl of SHAFTESBURY, Chairman of Committees, being absent, Lord BEAUMONT was moved to be Chairman.

LORD REDESDALE said, that as their Lordships had gone into Committee before the Motion was made, they were in this difficulty, that there was no one who had power to put the question.

LORD CAMPBELL apprehended that the House had an inherent right to elect a Chairman in the absence of the noble Lord who was Chairman of Committees; and if they possessed that power before going into Committee, he conceived that they could equally exercise it in Committee.

LORD STANLEY observed, that the difficulty appeared to be, who was to put the Motion which had been made, that Lord Beaumont take the chair?

EARL GREY was understood to say that, if it was not competent for any noble Lord to put that question, he did not see how their Lordships were to resume.

LORD BEAUMONT then took the chair.

On the 1st Clause being read,

LORD MONTEAGLE proposed an Amendment, providing that notices of ejectment might be served at any time between sunrise and sunset.

The MARQUESS of CLANRICARDE opposed the Amendment. He asked their Lordships to consider the consequences which had followed from the ejectment of tenants immediately before sunset; and, although he was ready to acknowledge that some inconvenience might be occasioned by this clause, he recommended their Lordships to adhere to it. This measure was rendered necessary because scenes had occurred in Ireland which were disgraceful to that country; and it would be a disgrace to the Legislature if they allowed the possibility of any repetition of those scenes. The noble Marquess here referred, for the purpose of showing the necessity of some legislation on the subject, to several cases of evictions, which exhibited circumstances of great suffering on the part of many of the people evicted; and contended that it was absolutely necessary that previous notice of eviction should be given to the guardians of the unions, in order that provision might be made for the destitute, in cases of necessity, to prevent them perishing by the roadside. It was not his wish to throw any general blame on the body of landlords, because he did not know how far they might be able to prevent the distressing scenes which sometimes accompanied evictions; but he had adverted to these matters for the purpose of showing that their Lordships were bound to provide, as far as possible, against the unnecessary loss of life. It was not too much, he thought, to require that the previous notice of evictions specified in the Bill should be given to the guardians of unions; and he therefore pressed their Lordships to accept the Bill as it stood.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS thought it would be better not to discuss all the clauses at once, but rather to take them *seriatim*, and let noble Lords have an opportunity of delivering their opinions upon each clause separately.

EARL GREY observed that the Committee, in considering the measure now before them, were called upon to reduce the provision for the evicted parties to its minimum, and to reduce also the inconvenience which the proprietors of land sustained, in order that property should be as much as possible improved and protected. No one could be more anxious to uphold the rights of property in Ireland than he was; but he could not conceal from himself the fact that, under the name of tenant-right attempts had been made in Ireland to resist the fair rights of property. These attempts, in his opinion, were assuming an alarming aspect. This Bill, he believed, would tend to check the advance of such a disposition as that to which he had alluded. But while protection was given to the landlord, they should take care that relief was provided for those poor people who were suddenly dispossessed of their homes. Let their Lordships remember the frightful cases which had occurred, in which large numbers of persons were ejected from their houses in the depth of winter, and they would not think that it was too much to give them notice to make arrangements for their further abode. He believed that the clause as it stood was a proper one, and he trusted their Lordships would sanction it. It was salutary, because it was intended to provide relief for the evicted persons, without placing a discretionary power of too large a character in the hands of the relieving officer. Both in England and Ireland the law expressly provided that the relieving officer was not to act on his own discretion, unless when the board of guardians could not be applied to. That was a sanitary provision. If the House were of opinion that this clause should stand, then it was proposed that due notice should be given to the board of guardians of the ejectment to take place, in order that some step should be taken for the relief of those who would be driven to apply for it. If such notice were not given to the board, it could know nothing of the ejectment, and therefore could not afford any adequate accommodation for the people ejected. Neither the relieving officer, nor the board, could in such a case know of the occurrence, and it might so happen that 300 or 400 persons might be turned out of their land at a late hour on a stormy night, exposed to all the severity of the weather, without shelter from its inclemency. The landlord and tenant question was one in which the public mind was in no ordinary degree interested, and he thought their Lordships should not refuse their sanction to a Bill which had passed with the general assent of the other House of Parliament, and which was, as he believed, in some degree calculated to meet the evils which arose out of the present position of that question.

Lord MONTEAGLE protested against its being held out by the noble Earl (Earl Grey), as it were *in terrorem*, that his object was to reduce the provision for the poor to the minimum, and to keep protection to the landlords at the maximum. On tho part of those who took the view of the question which he (Lord Monteagle) did, he rejected that construction. He should persist in taking the course which he thought right, and he was satisfied that, sooner or later, its prudence would be recognised.

The Marquess of CLANRICARDE reminded their Lordships that they were about to divide upon the question whether the word "before" be left out of the clause or not. The question was, whether notice was to be given "before."

The Earl of Rosse and the Duke of Leinster made some observations in opposition to the Bill.

The Earl of GLENGALL did not object to the principle of the Bill, but he did to many of its provisions. The Bill was founded upon a false notion of the evictions that had taken place upon Mr. Blake's estate; it was, in fact, called Mr. Blake's Bill. Great misapprehension existed as to that case. The reports in the blue book were made from the inquiries of persons without legal authority. The Poor Law Inspectors had, by law, no right to go into inquiries as between landlord and tenant; and in these inquiries only one side was usually heard—the evicted paupers, who resorted to any story to make out a case of hardship. He felt, therefore, great doubt as to the accuracy of reports that were founded upon one-sided inquiries. He objected to the Bill, that it would tend to encourage evictions by throwing the ejected paupers on the poor-rate. He objected to seven days' notice before eviction, since such a notice would afford an opportunity to get up a conspiracy to shoot the party who gave the notice.

The Earl of ST. GERMANS objected to the formal and public notice proposed. He had no objection to a notice to the relieving officer, that he might have time to prepare for giving shelter to the ejected paupers; twenty-four or forty-eight hours would be quite sufficient for the purpose, and would, he thought, meet the case. It would be an Irish mode of giving notice after the mischief was done.

The House divided on question that the word "before" stand part of the clause:—Content 23; Not-content 23.

By the rules of the House, the question was hereby resolved in the *Affirmative*.

Other Amendments moved and agreed to. Amendments to be reported.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, June 22, 1848.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—1° Constabulary Force (Ireland); Poor Relief; Parish Debts, &c.; Education of Infant Poor; Poor Law Officers' Superannuation; Piracy. 3° Imprisonment for Debt (Ireland).

NEW WRIT FOR HORSHAM.

MR. GORING said, that in consequence of the vote which the House had come to yesterday in favour of issuing the writ for the borough of Cheltenham, he would now move that a new writ be issued for the borough of Horsham. It would be disrespectful to the House to take up its time by arguing the question after the vote of yesterday, and he trusted the House would not refuse to order the immediate issue of the writ.

MR. AGLIONBY thought the time had come when the opinion of the House ought to be declared on the Bill of the hon. Member for the Flint boroughs (Sir J. Hanmer). Nothing was more inconvenient and inconsistent than for the House to order the issue of writs to certain boroughs on one day, and to suspend them in other cases on the next.

The House divided:—Ayes 54; Noes 50: Majority 4.

List of the AYES.

Adderley, C. B.
Anson, hon. Col.
Anstey, T. C.
Baillie, H. J.
Baldock, E. H.
Bankes, G.
Benbow, J.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Beresford, W.
Blackstone, W. S.
Bremridge, R.
Bruce, C. L. C.
Buller, C.
Burrell, Sir C. M.
Christy, S.
Codrington, Sir W.
Cubitt, W.
Dod, J. W.
Drax, J. S. W. S. E.
Drummond, H. H.
Edwards, H.
Fuller, A. E.
Galway, Visct.
Godson, R.
Goulburn, right hon. H.
Hawes, B.
Hildyard, R. C.
Hobhouse, T. B.
Hodgson, W. N.
Hornby, J.
Hudson, G.
Ingestre, Visct.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Maitland, T.
Mandeville, Visct.
Miles, P. W. S.
Napier, J.
O'Brien, J.
O'Brien, Sir L.
Pakington, Sir J.
Rendlesham, Lord
Renton, J. C.
Robinson, G. R.
Seymer, H. K.
Sidney, Ald.
Spooner, R.
Stafford, A.
Stuart, J.
Talfourd, Serg.
Tancred, H. W.
Urquhart, D.
Vyse, R. H. R. H.
Wadington, H. S.
Willoughby, Sir H.

TELLERS.

Goring, C.
Newdegate, C. N.

List of the NOES.

Baines, M. T.
Barnard, E. G.
Bellew, R. M.
Bowring, Dr.
Brotherton, J.
Clay, J.
Cobden, R.
Craig, W. G.
Currie, H.
Dundas, Adm.
Evans, J.
Fox, W. J.
Gibson, rt. hon. T. M.
Gladstone, rt. hn. W. E.
Greenall, G.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Hastie, A.
Hayter, W. G.
Herbert, H. A.
Herbert, rt. hon. S.
Hervey, Lord A.
Hill, Lord M.
Hood, Sir A.
Horsman, E.
King, hon. P. J. L.
Langston, J. H.
Lushington, C.
Mangles, R. D.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Moffatt, G.
Mowatt, F.
Muntz, G. F.
Nugent, Lord
Pearson, C.
Pechell, Capt.
Perfect, R.
Pilkington, J.
Richards, R.
Salwey, Col.
Stuart, Lord D.
Stuart, Lord J.
Thicknesse, R. A.
Thompson, Col.
Thornely, T.
Tufnell, H.
Turner, E.
Wawn, J. T.
Williams, J.
Williamson, Sir H.
Wyvill, M.

TELLERS.

Bright, J.
Thompson, G.

Writ to be issued.

DIFFERENTIAL DUTY ON RUM.

SIR L. O'BRIEN wished to put a question to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if that right hon. Gentleman had been in his place. The Irish distillers were dissatisfied with the arrangement which the right hon. Gentleman suggested he was disposed to make with regard to the differential duty on rum. They would be content with a moderate extent of protection, and were not desirous of retaining the present rate of differential duty; but the question they were anxious to have answered was, whether it was the determination of the Government to adhere to the sum of 4*d.* as the differential duty to be hereafter imposed on rum.

MR. HAWES, in the absence of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, said he hoped the hon. Baronet would give notice of his question for tomorrow.

MR. MOFFATT rose, and was about to resume the adjourned debate on the Sugar Duties, when

SIR L. O'BRIEN interposed, and, observing that no Cabinet Minister was present, moved the adjournment of the House. He had given previous notice to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he should put to him this question, which it was most important should be answered before the debate on the sugar duties was proceeded with. The answer given would determine not only the votes but also the speeches of hon. Members.

MR. F. MAULE thought the course taken in moving the adjournment of the House altogether unprecedented. It seemed there had been a meeting of Irish Members with reference to the differential duty on spirits, when it was resolved that a certain question should be put to the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but no public notice had been given to his right hon. Friend. [Sir L. O'Brien: I gave him notice at four o'clock.] At all events no public notice had been given. The Chancellor of the Exchequer could alone answer the question. He put it to the hon. Baronet and the House whether it would not be more regular and more courteous to his right hon. Friend to defer the question until the Chancellor of the Exchequer was in his place at a later period of the evening, and in the meantime to allow the debate to proceed?

Lord J. RUSSELL, having entered the House, said: With regard to the question which has been asked, I have in the first place to observe, that it does not immediately affect the matter before the House, as to going into Committee on the sugar duties. It is part of the plan of which I stated the outline on Friday last. Some of the Members of this House, representing their constituents, have made representations to my right hon. Friend; I had some conversation with him on the subject yesterday; he then stated that he was not fully in possession of their views. I had some conversation with him again today, when he said he had this morning some further information as to the views those Gentlemen entertained, and that he had the question still under consideration. We were to have some further deliberation on the subject, and my right hon. Friend, as soon as he can inform the House, will state what are the intentions of the Government on that point. I suppose the hon. Baronet wishes, although this is not the regular time for making a detailed statement of the scheme, for the reduction of the rum duties. I am not prepared to make it now, and I do not think it would be quite fair to postpone the Committee on the sugar duties until an answer is obtained to the question put by the hon. Baronet. My right hon. Friend will be in his place shortly, and will then give his answer.

Sir L. O'BRIEN repeated that the votes of several Members would depend on the answer received; and they were unwilling that the debate should go on until they knew the whole scheme of the Government.

Lord J. RUSSELL: Certainly I am not going to make any statement with the object of altering the vote of the hon. Baronet. We mean to make the proposition we think the best calculated to promote the interests of all concerned. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Droitwich has moved an Amendment to the effect that the protection to the West Indians is not sufficient; and if he thinks that the rum duty ought to be different from what it is, he must take his own course. We shall only propose what we think best for the public.

Lord G. BENTINCK: I think that the House is placed in a very extraordinary position. It is proposed that we should go into Committee to consider a specified measure that has been proposed by the Government. [Lord J. Russell: The sugar duties.] But half of that measure, intended to be a measure of relief to the West Indians, was the reduction of the duty on rum to the amount of *5d.* per gallon; and now we hear, unknown to this House, something of a bargain is being transacted out of doors between one of Her Majesty's Ministers, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Irish Members; and it is expected by the Irish Members that the Government will reduce their measure of relief offered to the West Indians, *quoad* rum, by *2d.* a gallon. I understand that the Irish Members are prepared, if that part of the Government measure which relates to the reduction of the differential duty between rum and British spirits be withdrawn, to support Her Majesty's Ministers in their proposition respecting the sugar duties. But while the West Indian interest and those engaged in sugar planting are, as is pretty well known, not satisfied with the measure offered to them, there may be a great many independent Gentlemen not connected with the East or West Indians, on the one hand, or the distillers, on the other, who may say, "This altogether is, upon the whole, a fair compromise; we think it offers sufficient relief to the West Indians, and we will not support the Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for Droitwich." But they may consider that *2d.* a gallon on rum may make the whole difference; and if they were aware that the measure of relief was to be cut short to the amount of *2d.* a gallon on rum, they would say, "We think that this measure is not now efficient as a measure of relief to the West Indies, and we will support the Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for Droitwich." I cannot conceive how the House can be in a condition to consider the Amendment of the hon. Member for Droitwich until we know precisely whether the Government intend to adhere to their own measure. [*The Chancellor of the Exchequer entered the House.*] I see the right hon. Gentleman is now in his place. I take it for granted he has made up his mind on the subject. He appears to be the dictator of the Government in this matter; perhaps he will inform us whether they mean really to persevere with their plan?

LORD J. RUSSELL: I hope I may be allowed to explain what I said, because the noble Lord has in a strange manner so totally misapprehended me. I stated, that whatever proposition we should make should be made with a view to the public interests, and public interests alone. Then, he says, we are making a bargain with certain Members with a view to secure their support. This is the direct contrary of what I said. I must, therefore, again repeat that, although there is of course the greatest secrecy observed with regard to measures to be brought before the House with regard to finance and trade, it is usual, after being brought forward, that the Government should hear different parties who may be affected, who have modifications and alterations to suggest; and I stated that my right hon. Friend had under consideration the statements made to him on the part of the West India body, the distillers, and others; and, as I have already stated, our decision on these points will be with a view to the public interests, not with a view to obtain the votes of any hon. Members.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: When any proposal connected with either finance or trade has been submitted to this House, it is usual for the Government to receive any communications that may be made to them by parties more immediately affected by it. I yesterday received intimation from the hon. Baronet that a deputation wished to see me on the subject of the differential duty between rum and British spirits, and on another subject, namely, an allowance for waste in British spirits in warehouse; whether the duty would be taken when the spirits were taken out, instead of when they were in the warehouse? The hon. Baronet and five other Irish Members waited on me this morning, and stated their opinion, formed on the information they had received from the Irish distillers, that the reducing the differential duty from 9*d.* to 4*d.* would be prejudicial to the Irish distillers, and, inasmuch as it would diminish the quantity of grain converted into spirits, it would be prejudicial to the Irish grower. I heard the statements they made. I stated to them that, of course, it would be my duty to submit their representations to my Colleagues; and with regard to the second point, I had it under consideration, and, if it were possible to do it safely, it should be done. They then intimated to me that the votes of Gentlemen in this House would depend on the answer I should give to the question. My answer to them was that we had proposed what we believed right; all we could say was that the most attentive consideration would be given to their statements; and when pressed for an answer I said, "I must leave each Gentleman to take the course he thinks right." I could not pretend either to receive or dictate terms. I could state to my Colleagues the representations that had been made to me; and, whatever answer I might give, the deputation should take what course they thought proper. Before the usual time for the meeting of the House, I received a note informing me of the intention of the hon. Baronet to put to me a question to-night. I came down to the House for the purpose of answering the question of my hon. Friend, that the representations made should be considered. I sat here for some time; I was here for about half an hour. The House was engaged with a railroad discussion, in which, as the House knows, it is very seldom considered to be the part of the Government to vote, either on one side or the other. Having a good deal of business to do, I went back to Downing-street, where I have been till this moment. I came down whenever I heard that public business was likely to proceed. That is the real history of what has taken place.

MR. DISRAELI: The right hon. Gentleman has no doubt given a simple and accurate narrative. It is said to be a matter of the greatest inconvenience, when changes are contemplated regarding trade, that Government should hold communication with the different parties interested—indeed, it is impossible to do that until Ministers have made the exposition of their scheme to this House. But Her Majesty's Government must recollect that they have had the opportunity of making their statement, and it is their fault if, after having made that general statement of their plan, they have not allowed the country a sufficient interval between the first exposition and subsequent debate, and they must take the consequences. I must assume that they did not require the opportunity of consulting Her Majesty's subjects, because they felt confidence in their plan—it was perfectly matured—it was a matter of all others they had well considered. It is not for the noble Lord to reproach my noble Friend for the observations he has made. My noble Friend made no imputation whatever on the conduct of the Government morally; but, as an administrative body, they are open to very grave imputation, for they have no right to call on the House of Commons to debate their plan while a very important part of it is wanting. He expected an answer to a question, and the right hon. Gentleman has given us a narrative. We must consider the effect which that answer will have, not only on the division, but on the debate. Gentlemen naturally wish before they give their opinion on the plan of the Government that they should be acquainted with it; but their plan is not before the House; we cannot get it; and, what is more, the Treasury bench is now full of Cabinet Ministers, but we are no wiser than we were when, in the absence of all of them, a Motion was made for the adjournment of the House.

Mr. C. BULLER was astonished at the declaration of the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire that his noble Friend (Lord J. Russell) had no right to resent or even to call for an explanation of the imputation which the noble Lord the Member for Lynn had cast upon the Government. Why, he (Mr. C. Buller) asserted that every Gentleman sitting upon those benches, and every one who had at heart the honour of the House, ought to resent such an unfounded imputation. The hon. Member for Buckinghamshire said that the imputation was directed against the Government as an administration, and not against its morality. But let him remind the House of what had really passed. It must be conceded that the noble Lord the Member for Lynn never minced his language for fear it might be said of him that he sinned against good taste; and the words of the noble Lord were, that the Government were making a bargain—a bargain, he must be allowed to add, of the basest kind—with the Irish Members, in order to get their votes on this question. He had the highest respect for the candour and straightforwardness of the noble Lord, widely as he differed from him in his political views; but the House would allow him to call its attention for a moment to the exceeding recklesness and unfairness of the noble Lord's charge. The statement made by the hon. Baronet the Member for Clare was, that the deputation had acquainted the Chancellor of the Exchequer with the views which they entertained, and added that some of their votes might depend upon the answer he gave to the question put to him. No answer was given, and thus it clearly appeared that no bargain was made. His noble Friend at the head of the Government stated that the Irish Members must consult their consciences on the subject, and that the Government would consult their own consciences, without reference to the convenience of a division, and then the noble Lord the Member for Lynn called this a bargain. [Lord G. Bentinck: I wanted to know what bargain had been made.] He thought it would be better if hon. Members would attribute to one another ordinary honesty and fair dealing, and not throw out imputations with such utter recklessness and levity as had marked the speech of the noble Lord. If he were inclined to throw out imputations of unfair dealing, he might say that the noble Lord and the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire seemed inclined to catch a few votes in the most extraordinary mode that he ever recollected. The noble Lord and the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire considered that the Government had given the West Indies too little protection, and on that ground they had determined to vote against the Government plan. On a sudden they found out that some Gentlemen were disposed to vote against the plan of the Government, because they considered that the West Indies would have too much protection; and it was on account of these few stray votes that all this hubbub had been raised, and that charges had been made, which he hoped, after the satisfactory explanation that had been given, would be completely withdrawn.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER wished to say that there were points raised by the deputation, the first of which related to the differential duty. On that point his answer to the deputation was, that he would lay before his Colleagues the statements which had been made, and the arguments which had been employed. The other point was the allowance for wastage, and he had said that he was favourably disposed to the consideration of that matter, but that he could not give the deputation an answer upon it, until he had communicated with the Excise.

Mr. STUART thought it impossible

that matters could remain as they were, considering the position of the Government and the House. A question had been put by the hon. Member for Clare, whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer meant to adhere to the duty on rum as originally put forth; and he had not yet received an answer. It had also been distinctly stated, that the votes of Members would depend on the answer which the right hon. Gentleman gave; and yet no answer was given to the question. His noble Friend (Lord G. Bentinck) therefore said, that if they did not answer the question, they were evidently taking time to consider which course would give most votes, and that, therefore, they were doing that which was equivalent to driving a bargain. This the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Liskeard said would be downright immorality, if it existed. He (Mr. Stuart) thought that this was rather a harsh view of the matter; but certainly it was not a state of matters creditable to the Government or to the House. They were called upon to go into a great debate on West India distress, without the Government being able to tell them whether or not they adhered to one of the remedies proposed for that distress. He would ask if ever a Government was placed in a position so discreditable, and if such a state of things was respectful to the House? He did not see that it was the duty of the House to proceed with the discussion of this important question in such circumstances, and without knowing whether Government adhered to their plan or not. He did not consider that there was any moral imputation on the Government, but believed that the position they were in proceeded altogether from their weakness.

Mr. LABOUCHERE rose with great regret to prolong this discussion, which had lasted already a great deal too long; but the statements made by the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Stuart) were so extraordinary, that he could not help saying a few words. If the doctrine laid down by the hon. and learned Gentleman was to prevail, the whole course that every Government took in the discussion of complicated measures of trade must be entirely altered. He never recollected a large measure containing changes connected with the trade of this country being brought forward without the interests affected by those changes seeking an interview with the Government; and it was highly proper and necessary that the Government should not only receive representations from those parties and hear their objections, but that it should deliberately weigh those objections, and act upon them, if they were found to be well grounded. He, therefore, thought that in the present instance the Chancellor of the Exchequer had only done that which any Chancellor of the Exchequer would think it is his duty to do in similar circumstances. Certain representations were urged upon him by Gentlemen connected with a great interest; and his answer was, that he would treat their proposals with every mark of respect—that he would lay them before his Colleagues, and in due time give an explicit answer. If such representations, and such a mode of receiving them, were to be made a pretext for delaying the progress of the measure, he did not see how any measure, if met in a similar way, could ever be brought to a determination. Undoubtedly, if the Government was induced by any undue pressure upon them to depart from the main principles of any measure they brought forward, the House would do well to condemn their conduct. Undoubtedly, this question of the equalisation of the duties on foreign and home-made spirits was a very important one; but to say that they could not discuss the whole subject of the sugar duties without knowing whether the duty on rum would be 4*d.* or 6*d.*, was, in his estimation, perfectly absurd. Were they not to go on with the discussion of the measure merely because the Chancellor of the Exchequer had received a deputation, and in answer to their proposals had told them he would consult his Colleagues? In 1846, when the system of the sugar duties which now existed was brought forward, the Government received frequent deputations on the subject.

MR. GOULBURN did not understand that any imputation was cast on the Chancellor of the Exchequer for receiving the representations of those interested in this question. He knew very well that those who had to conduct public affairs frequently after the announcement of measures in Parliament had to consider the opinions of those interested in the proposed changes, and regulate their conduct accordingly; but the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Labouchere) must observe that the question before the House was, in many respects, materially different from this. The question with which they had to deal was, how were they to afford direct relief to a suffering interest? and the Government proposed a plan of which one component part was a relaxation of the existing duties on spirits imported from the colonies, and another part was an alteration in the existing duties imposed on another article of colonial produce, namely, sugar. Now, how far that relief might be effectual or not, depended not upon the rule they might adopt with respect to one of these articles, but with respect to both. And when the right hon. Gentleman said it was of no importance to the question whether they made the duty on rum 4*d.* or 6*d.*—that it was a matter of indifference whether 50 per cent was added to or taken from the duty, surely it was not extraordinary if those whose interests were hanging in the balance should be anxious to know before they gave their opinion on the plan, whether that duty of 50 per cent was to be given or not. They all knew that in the Session before last the Government were of opinion that the protecting duty should be reduced to 6*d.*, but that they ultimately increased it to 9*d.* They weighed all the arguments of the distress on the one side, and of the Excise on the other; and now, when the right hon. Gentleman told them that it might be either 4*d.* or 6*d.*, really their position was such they could not confidently pronounce an opinion on the whole subject.

Motion for adjournment withdrawn.

Mr. GOULBURN should like to know, if the noble Lord had considered the proposition of the hon. Member for Liverpool (Mr. Cardwell), as to the introduction of a temporary Bill for continuing and for limiting the period of the present sugar duties? They had lost so much time that night, that it was scarcely possible, with any activity on the part of the Government and the House, if the proposition of the Government was to be introduced in the shape of a Bill, that it could receive the Royal Assent before the 5th of July. The noble Lord was aware that there was an immense amount of foreign sugar at this moment in bond, and as his proposal was to afford relief to the West India interest, he would see that from 30,000 to 40,000 tons of sugar brought into the market at a reduced price must materially affect any measures of relief that could be proposed.

Lord J. RUSSELL would see after the division on the Motion of the hon. Member for Droitwich, if there were sufficient time to go through with the proposition as made; and, if not, he should then be prepared to accede to the proposal of the hon. Member for Liverpool; but not so as the matter stood at present.

Mr. CARDWELL feared it was not possible consistently with the rules of the House to wait until the House should have decided on the proposition now under its consideration. It was a fixed rule to take only one stage every day of a Money Bill. There were seven stages to be passed in that House. The Bill must then go to the House of Lords and afterwards obtain the Royal Assent. This debate was not expected to close to-night. Supposing it closed to-morrow night, there were seven more stages to pass in that House before they could send the Bill to the House of Lords. If the noble Lord waited the result of the discussion before deciding, he would find it out of his power to carry an unopposed Bill without a suspension of the Standing Orders altogether unprecedented.

Subject at an end, and adjourned debate resumed.

SUGAR DUTIES—ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Mr. MOFFATT thought it would be well for the House to consider, in the first instance, what would be the effect of the proposition of the Government with respect to the people of this country. The reduction of the duty on sugar to the amount of 1*s.* per cwt. would involve a loss to the revenue of 250,000*l.* the first year, 500,000*l.* the next year, of 750,000*l.* the following year, and of 1,000,000*l.* the fourth year, making a sum of no less than 2,500,000*l.* entirely lost to the public Exchequer. The reduction of the proposed duty on rum, perhaps, was scarcely a fair subject for remark, as the House did not know what were the precise intentions of the Government as to the amount. But the equalisation of such duties was an exceedingly wise and just measure, and he apprehended no permanent injury to the distilling interests of the country in consequence of such a reduction as that which had been originally intimated. With respect to the grant of 500,000*l.*, he should also be disposed to express his concurrence in that part of the scheme. As for the protection to the West Indian interests afforded by the alteration of the scale of sugar duties, he believed it was greater than had been indicated by the noble Lord at the head of Her Majesty's Government, or was appreciated by hon. Members on the opposite side of the House. Under the present scale the duties next July would be 14*s.* on colonial and 18*s.* 6*d.* on foreign sugar. Under the scale proposed by Her Majesty's Government, the duties would be 13*s.* on colonial and 20*s.* on foreign sugar, making an increase of protection of from 33 to 34 per cent. That was a very large increase, and was likely to have a very material effect in decreasing the supply which this country was otherwise likely to receive of foreign sugar. He did not understand what was the tendency of the alteration proposed to be made in the scale, unless it were to produce an increase in the price of sugar. Having paid close attention to the evidence of the West India Committee, of which he was a member, he confessed he could not find in the evidence, any justification for the measures proposed as generally remedial in the case of the West Indies. There was not a witness who did not say that labour was the great thing they wanted. The great object of Government ought to have been to propose measures for affording a supply of labour, even at any cost, to the West Indies; because it was by an act of the Government that the supply of labour there had been effected. But there was nothing in the evidence to change the opinion he had previously entertained, that the West Indian colonies were capable of competing with foreign countries. The hon. Baronet the Member for Droitwich had estimated the cost of producing sugar in Cuba at 6*s.* 10*d.* per cwt. Had the hon. Baronet consulted the evidence, he would have seen that the cost of producing sugar was generally from 13*s.* to 15*s.* With prices at 18*s.* 8*d.* and 14*s.* 1*d.* per cwt., the planters of Cuba were losing money. It was not desirable to apply one general rule to all the dependencies of the country. He could imagine no two cases more different than that of India and that of Jamaica. In the former there was no deficiency of labour, and they had another market for their sugar. The question of laying on a tax for the sake of British India was a very different question from that with respect to the measures which the state of Jamaica required. The East Indies complained in particular of the classification of sugar adopted in 1844. He found that there was not a single witness examined before the Committee with regard to the Mauritius and the West India Islands who did not complain of the enormous cost of the local Government. There had been enormous increase in taxation within the last few years. In 1832 the total charge of the Government in Demerara was 56,000*l.*; in 1847 the charges amounted to no less than 225,000*l.* In the West India isles there had been also a great increase in the expenditure. The greatest distress existed in Trinidad, British Guiana, and Jamaica. In the speech of the noble Lord the Member for the city of London, not the least hope was held out of any reduction of such expenditure. In another respect, also, he must express himself disappointed with the proposition of the Government. There were large improvements which might be made at comparatively small cost in those colonies. One most competent witness, Lord Howard de Walden, had stated that a tramway, for example, might at an expense of 15,000*l.* be formed in a particular district, where it would be of the greatest advantage to fifteeen or sixteen sugar estates. It was with reluctance that he felt himself compelled to say he could not support the proposition of Her Majesty's Government. He was unwilling to resume his seat without conveying to the noble Lord who presided over the West Indian Committee (Lord G. Bentinck) the tribute of gratitude which he felt the House and the country owed to the noble Lord for the great attention he had bestowed on the subject. It was a national benefit to investigate the circumstances which attended the great loss which had occurred, and it was impossible sufficiently to acknowledge the great exertions of the noble Lord. He should be delighted if the noble Lord could infuse into the West Indian planters any of the zeal and energy he had displayed in the course of the inquiry. He had no doubt this discussion would terminate in some practical measure; and he should be glad if the Government could give any further explanation to the House with respect to their views on the whole subject, which might hold out a prospect of some measures other than the present plan, which he regarded as exceedingly inefficient.

MR. GLADSTONE: Although it will be my duty in the course of the remarks I shall have to make to the House to express my dissent in important particulars from the plan of Her Majesty's Government, and my inability to vote in its favour, yet I hope I can say nothing inconsistent with the admission I most frankly make, that I believe not only that it is with the most sincere desire to deal justly with the different interests involved in the present question that Ministers have brought forward their proposition, but that they have also had to treat a question of most extraordinary difficulty. I wish to state so most explicitly, before proceeding to explain my own opinion. It rarely happens that any question comes before Parliament involving so great a variety of conflicting considerations, with respect to which the utmost patience, the utmost care, the utmost ability, find such immense difficulty in producing anything like harmony. Now, I feel myself under considerable difficulty imposed upon me by the form of the proceedings of this House with respect to the vote I have to give. My general ground of objection to the measure of the Government is, that as a measure of relief to colonial distress it is less than the necessity of the case demands; and, likewise, I am bound to add that—taking our present financial circumstances and position into view—it opens objections of a financial character which to my mind are altogether insurmountable. My vote on this question cannot give an adequate expression to my sentiments on this point. I have before me the choice of voting for the amendment of my hon. Friend, that you, Sir, do not leave the chair, or of voting against him in order to negative that proposition, or to go into Committee and support the proposition, that the duty on colonial sugar be reduced to 13*s*. Now, under the circumstances, I object to reducing the duty on colonial sugar to 13*s.*; but I should not do justice to my view of the case were I to wait until you, Sir, leave the chair, before expressing the whole nature and scope of my objection. Neither can I vote in the negative that you shall not quit the chair, because by doing so I should be expressing a sentiment of indisposition to reconsider and modify, under the pressure of a great necessity, the scale of duties agreed to in 1846. Agreeing, as I do, then, with the proposition contained in the Motion of my hon. Friend—although it does not express all that I wish to express—yet, agreeing, as I do, with it so far as that I think the measure now proposed is inadequate to the necessities of the case, I must vote with him, at the same time taking the liberty of explaining to the House as clearly as I am able the views I entertain, in order that I may not be misunderstood, nor may be supposed to entertain precisely the same views in regard to the mode of administering relief to the West Indies which I rather believe he himself entertains. With respect to this case, if I may consider the reasons which must influence us in the midst of such difficulties as must beset every form of adequately dealing with the distress of the West Indies, there are two grounds upon which I can justify myself in proceeding to deal with it, notwithstanding the magnitude and costliness of that proceeding; I do not propose to raise—as others have not raised—the discussion in which many of us have frequently been engaged, and none more frequently than myself, with respect to the distinction between the admission of sugar the produce of free labour, and sugar fed and supplied by the slave trade. I confess that the opinions which I formerly expressed on the subject remain unchanged. I am as conscious of the difficulties of the subject as I formerly was. I admit that no course can be taken which is on all points satisfactory; but I must say that I do not regret having been the instrument of inserting in the law of this country that distinction, and on having, on many occasions, on the floor of this House, endeavoured to defend it. That question I look upon as practically settled, and I do not propose to raise it, although it is not without regret that I admit that such is my view of its position. But there are two grounds, as I have said, on which I think I can found proceedings. I think it is impossible for me to found proceedings upon the general doctrine of protection to a domestic and colonial interest. I think we have before us a great social problem with respect to the relations between the two races in the West Indies. It appears to me that under the circumstances of the case, it is poor and shallow philosophy to look upon the face of West Indian society and say—though it is an important fact in itself—that there are 90 per cent of the population contented, and only one-tenth suffering distress. I admit that these one-tenth have no right to be considered or cared for, except upon the ground that the property of these one-tenth, and the maintaining of a white class in colonial society, is essential, as I believe, to the continuance of the social progress of the others. But if you are content to allow these others to vegetate, and live in a mere state of material well-being, then I grant that you may adopt that language. If such is your view, then I think the best thing you can do is to pay over in hard money whatever you think is due to the suffering interest, and altogether abandon the idea of restoring the commercial prosperity of the islands. But when I speak of restoring commercial prosperity to those islands—although I think it fair to contemplate the West Indian claim of sympathy, not merely for the sake of their commercial prosperity, but because I firmly believe that their commercial prosperity and the maintenance of these islands in a condition to continue to produce a staple commodity for export to Europe, is a condition on which depends their well-being, considered in its highest aspects; but I say that when I speak of the West Indies, I hold that the West Indies have a claim of a distinct nature, altogether apart from those protected interests ordinarily talked of when we deprived them of protection—a claim of a distinct nature, not only upon the humanity and equity, but, in the strictest sense, upon the justice of this House. I think the West Indians are entitled to say, "Our claim is a claim of money; we ask you to sacrifice a portion of the public funds for our relief, and we ask it on the ground that we suffered at your hands." This is not a matter of charge against any particular Parliament or any particular Government, as I shall have occasion to show in the course of my remarks. But to my mind it is demonstrable that, in some important particulars, the West Indians have a claim for pecuniary relief as strong as under any imaginable circumstances a particular class can have against a particular State. I will mention two instances. What was the case of the apprenticeships? I refer to an historical fact beyond dispute, when I say that the apprenticeships were as much a part of the compensation to the West Indies as were the 20,000,000*l.* When I have heard the West Indians and others complain that the 20,000,000*l.* was not awarded as compensation for the slaves, but merely as a composition, inasmuch as the slave labour was estimated at the value of 40,000,000*l.*, it has always appeared to me an unjust remark, because that kept out of view the pecuniary labour received by the West Indies under the apprenticeship system. What is the history of that system? It was first proposed that the apprenticeship system should continue for twelve years; that was the view of the Government, Lord Grey thinking that that amount of compensation for the labour of the islands a just demand. It was then reduced to six years during the passing of the Abolition Act by Lord Stanley. It is true that the West Indians acquiesced in the reduction, so I do not found any charge upon it. After four years had passed, a system of agitation arose in this country, and the West Indians were compelled to abandon the remaining two years, being a reduction of one-third of the period which had been voted as part of the remuneration. It will be remembered by many who hear me, that several divisions took place in this House on the subject—that in the first division the House affirmed by a large majority that the apprenticeships should continue; but on the next division, the House affirmed by a small majority that it should be put an end to; and that on the third division the House reaffirmed by a large majority that it should continue for the full term. But, of course, the effect of this Parliamentary agitation, and of the movement connected with it out of doors, was to unsettle the public mind on the subject, and to produce such a state of feeling, particularly in the colonies, that, whether wise or not, it was certainly found to be necessary to propose to abandon it. Sir Lionel Smith, in his speech to the Jamaica House of Assembly, on the 5th of June, 1838, said—

> "It is my duty to declare my sentiments, and to recommend to you early and equal abolition of apprenticeship for all parties. Should your views be opposed to the policy I recommend, I would entreat you to consider well how impracticable it will be to carry on coercive labour; always difficult, it would in future be in peril of constant comparison with other colonies made free, and with those estates in this island made free by individual proprietors."

I think I have read sufficient to show the House there absolutely existed no option on the part of those who were thus addressed—that it was a virtual withdrawal of the engagement of the Sovereign Power to maintain order, and enforce the performance of legal duties by that class of the community. I am not blaming any one. I am merely stating the fact with the view of showing that I am strictly warranted in saying that one-third part of the compensation voted by Parliament to the West Indian class in the form of labour was withdrawn from them by the action, partly of Parliament, partly of the Government, and much more of the public opinion of the country at home. With respect to immigration also, what was the case? The West Indians, generally exhausted in their capital and means, now find you willing to afford them great latitude in respect to immigration. But they justly tell you that they have been arguing the question with you for the last twelve or fourteen years; that immediately after the apprenticeship system commenced they began to consider how they could enlarge the supplies of labour, but that they met with restraint and opposition in every direction. And when I am referring to these restrictions, I do not exactly blame the temper or jealousy which prompted it. I think there were the best reasons, even at great hazard, for taking effectual security that there should be no paltering with the principles of humanity, philosophy, and religion on which they were acting. Of course, I do not justify you going beyond what was necessary; but up to the point of necessity I think it was right to take effectual guarantees that nothing resembling slavery, even in name, should either in name or in substance be revived. Having guarded myself on this point, I shall now proceed to state what were the actual facts. In the first place, the immigration of Coolies from the East Indies was absolutely prohibited. This prohibition was afterwards removed, but it was provided that no contract should be entered into for more than twelve months, and also that under no circumstances should a contract be formed except in the colony. Internal regulations were likewise enacted of a most minute and multitudinous character, which greatly hampered any little free agency that was left in the planters with respect to the employment of labour. Among other regulations, conceived no doubt in a paternal spirit, it was required that the doctor should visit the Coolies at least every other day, or oftener, if necessary. There were some circumstances which took place in this House to which I cannot help referring as a strong indication of the state of feeling with respect to this subject. The noble Lord, now the First Minister of the Crown, exhibited considerable courage in attempting to check the excessive actions of this philanthropic sentiment. In 1840, with some risk and inconvenience to himself and his Government, he introduced, for the sake of challenging the opinion of Parliament—not because it was necessary, for the power of the Executive was sufficient, but for the sake of challenging the opinion of Parliament on this subject—introduced into the Passengers' Act a clause having reference to the policy of introducing Coolies into the Mauritius. Two debates and divisions took place upon that clause; and although the noble Lord used every effort to carry it, he was beaten on the second division by a considerable majority on the 22nd of June, 1840, the Ayes being 109, and the Noes 158. Nothing could be more impartial than the composition of the majority. There was the name of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth (Sir R. Peel), the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Ripon (Sir J. Graham), and other Gentlemen of that school of politics. The name of the present Under Secretary of the Colonies (Mr. Hawes) was also in the majority, and he acted as a teller on the division; and the present Secretary for the Colonies was the opponent of the Motion. Certain language used on that occasion was extremely strong. Lord Grey said—

> "He thought that in reality the only effect of this Bill would be to permit that atrocious trade, which had before existed, to be renewed under some circumstances or other; and although he had no doubt that his noble Friend the Secretary for the Colonies would endeavour to put an end to the evils of that trade by the appointment of agents and other means, he had the strongest doubts how far any sufficient regulation could be possibly effected."

I think, therefore, that in point of immigration the West Indies have got a strong case against you when they come forward and state—" We have been anxious for twelve or fourteen years to make contracts with immigrants; but you denied us the privilege when we had full means and capacity to make use of them, and you only now declare your willingness to yield it to us after we have become ruined and exhausted in the interval." I am not now entering into the question whether it was right or wrong to check the disposition to resort to immigration. I am afraid that, in the case of the Mauritius, where the system has been carried a great length, it has led to very considerable social evils. It is possible, therefore, that in respect to the highest view of the question you may have acted with considerable wisdom; but with respect to the West India proprietors it is plain they are in a peculiar condition; we asked them to make considerable sacrifices; and the spirit of the British people will not, I am sure, refuse to acknowledge the appeal to the justice which arises out of circumstances such as these. Such is my view of the nature of the claim of the West Indians against the State. I am most anxious that it should be understood. I confess I think nothing can be more distinct than the claim of the West Indians, upon the score of positive injury inflicted upon them by the direct agency of the Legislature, and that not by Parliament, not by Government, any further than they were the organs and instruments of public opinion. I say nothing can be more distinct than their claim to money or money's worth; or, on the other hand, protection to their native produce. I now come to the mode in which Government propose to meet and satisfy this claim. I pass by one or two points which were mentioned by the noble Lord. I pass with only a single remark the question relating to the duty on rum. If we were to construe very strictly some expressions which he used to-night, we might imagine that the whole of that question remained undecided; but upon the whole, adverting to the language of the noble Lord with that construction which common sense requires, I rather apprehend that the intention of the right hon. Gentleman was more to conform to the usages of official courtesy than to imply that any serious doubt had arisen in his mind, or was likely to arise in the minds of his Colleagues, with respect to the proposed duty on rum. I pass by also the question of contracts, not because it is not important, but because it does not require a long discussion. I will only say that I am glad that the Government have embodied that matter in the measure they propose to introduce. But as I have said before, I do not think that the relief proposed to be afforded by the Government is such as the exigencies of the case demand. I will not inquire whether in every respect it is a mode of application the most judicious; but I think that a further extension of relief, over and above the measure of the Government, is necessary. I object to fixing a definite time within which we may induce the intelligence and capital of the country to give a fair trial to the experiment of free labour in the West Indies, now that we have determined to bind the hands of the planters with respect to the assistance you are to give them in the importation of labour. I do not think we ought to entertain a measure of this kind at all, unless we make up our minds to go to such an extent as we have reason to believe will be sufficient for effecting the relief required; and this measure, I think, does not go to the extent which either justice or policy demands. Then I come across the question—in what form you propose to give the relief? If we refer to the opinions which appear in the organ of the purest principles of free trade in this House, we may assume there is a disposition to acquiesce in the proposition that some part of the relief should be in the form of the continuance of protective duties. But, on the other hand, it seems to be the opinion of the hon. Baronet who moved the Amendment, that we ought to look to a large increase of protection, and to a retracing of our steps in the matter of protective duties; and that in the mean time we ought to give 10*s.* a cwt. for six or more years. Without saying that if there are no other modes of giving pecuniary relief, we should fail to increase protective duties, I would say that I would admit that plan with great reluctance. I feel that reluctance on two grounds. In the first place, with every disposition to acknowledge our duty to our East Indian fellow-subjects and the Mauritius, I think there are some most important peculiarities in the West Indies that do not apply to them; and, in calling upon the people of England to make a considerable sacrifice to satisfy the claims of justice—not to relieve distress merely because it is distress, but to do justice to the West Indies, I think it would be a very fair objection to a very high protective duty, such as 10*s.* would be, if those other colonies were allowed, in an equal degree, that relief, placed as they are under very unequal necessities and with very unequal claims. But, further, I cannot avoid the apprehension that a great reaction in point of protective duties would diminish, perhaps, that stimulus to energy and the economy of labour upon which, after all, our principal hopes of success in interposing must depend; and I fear also that such a reaction in protective duties would lead to a corresponding reaction in the wages of labour in the West Indies. I am not looking to protection as a matter of policy, but I argue it as a mode of paying British money; and if I am asked, taking the present condition of the British population, on the one hand, and the present condition of the negro population in the West Indies, on the other, I say that to that relief which you are called upon to vote, the negroes of the West Indies manifestly have no public claim. It is our delight to know that they are in their material condition superior, perhaps, to any peasantry in the world. As regards their social and moral condition, they have made a most extraordinary progress, and their prospects are of the most promising kind; but that is no reason why we should throw away the funds of the country in giving a further stimulus to that condition, which is one of comfort fully adequate to their scale in society and their desires. I am not, therefore, in favour of retracing our course as to protection duties; and I should rather prefer the plan of Government, of a simple descending scale of duties for a series of years. I think, if we are to consider how we can make a proposal that shall be as far as it goes intelligible and attractive to the capitalist, it will be much better, having determined the amount of protection we ought to give, to say to him, "You shall have such an amount for so many years," than to present a beautiful scheme of this kind, arranged in two parallel columns, and requiring him to tax his ingenuity to comprehend all its bearings. To make the preparation attractive for competing with slave-labour sugar in the markets of the world, is not to be done by teaching a man to do with 5*s*. protection this year and 4*s*. next, like the person who tried to teach his horse to live upon nothing, and reduced his food to a handful of straw, but then the animal died; that, I say, is not the preparation we want; but it must be such as will lead to a considerable application of capital and intelligence to the cultivation of sugar in the West Indies, by sending out machinery and attempting the best modes of agriculture and manufacture, and thus trusting to what that will do. I think, therefore, that an uniform scale for a term of years would be better than the descending plan of the Government; and I must confess that I doubt whether the object is adequate; for the operation of it may be, in fact, to fix the higher duty upon the immensely larger quantity of sugar, while a very small proportion of sugar would pay the muscovado foreign duty, whilst it tends to blind the public mind to the real amount of protection you are virtually going to give. It would be better for the Government to say, "We will give you the protection the law affords you at this moment, of 6*s*. a cwt." I must also say that I think, upon the grounds I shall presently explain, that the reduction by 1*s*. of the duty on colonial sugar, reducing it from 14*s*. to 13*s*., on the 5th of July, a most impolitic measure. Until we have brought the finances of this country into a sounder and more healthful state, I am not prepared to reduce the duty on colonial sugar; and especially because a reduction is attended with this great disadvantage, that on account of that very minute reduction, the noble Lord, if I understood him right, is going to restore the exclusion which formerly existed, and not allow the use of sugar in breweries. I contend that that prohibition is most undesirable, unless there are very strong reasons for inducing us to adopt it. It cuts off one source of consumption, and you must, in speaking of the consumption of sugar, allow for the quantity that will be withdrawn on that account, whilst it restores to our commercial code a prohibition after we have been so long engaged in abolishing everything that savours of that principle. I will now go on to say that I have seen with deep regret the disposition to jealousy still subsisting in this country. I know not whether it is ascribable to the personal opinions of the noble Lord the Colonial Secretary, or the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies, or not; but I think there are still some unnecessary remains of jealousy with respect to the internal legislation of the colonies as regards such subjects as vagrancy and squatting. I thought that the speech of the noble Lord was very vague and meagre on that part of the subject, considering its importance, when he said he could assure the House that his noble Friend the Secretary for the Colonies would be willing to attend to all proposals that were made to him. Upon occasions like this, what we rather anticipate is, not that the Secretary for the Colonies should sit in his office receiving proposals, but that, being in perfect possession of all information in the case, he in his office should make proposals. [Lord J. RUSSELL: The proposals came from the Colonial Legislature.—Mr. HAWES: They have full power to legislate on this subject.] I think not, and I doubt whether it is wise to trust the Colonial Legislatures with absolute power on this subject. I assume that we have Governors in every colony upon whose humanity and philanthropy you can rely; and when you have such Governors I should be inclined to place implicit confidence in them upon this subject. I find this subject was referred to by the Sugar and Coffee Planting Committee; and I cannot refer to that Committee without offering my tribute of praise to the noble Lord who presided on that Committee for the great service he has done to the cause of truth and justice by the assiduity, unwearied zeal, and talent with which he conducted that inquiry. But I will refer to the Coolie regulations which were devised in Trinidad by Major Fagan, and sanctioned by Lord Harris. Major Fagan was recommended there by the East India Company; and no one will suspect, therefore, that the Coolies would not be taken care of under his regulations. With respect to the character of Lord Harris, I rejoice to say it is now perfectly established in the public estimation of this country. Lord Harris sanctioned certain regulations devised by Major Fagan for the management of the Coolies, but they were disallowed by the noble Lord now at the Colonial Office, first, because the Governor had no sufficient authority to give to them the force of law. That was an intelligible ground of objection. But the noble Lord likewise said he objected to many of those regulations. Now, I wish to exemplify what I mean by instances; and I say that, upon such such a question as that, and with the confidence which I suppose to exist in your Governors, I think a Secretary of State in Downing-street in 1848 ought to be very shy indeed of enforcing his opinions against opinions sent to him under the sanction of undisputed character and impartiality—of undisputed intelligence and of local knowledge. The noble Lord, in his despatch upon the subject, has numbered some of the heads of the regulations to which he objects; and, in particular, one of those to which he objects is a regulation for checking the increase of drunkenness amongst the Coolie labourers. I know that that might be a very strange regulation to issue to the master manufacturers in this country; but considering the circumstances of the Coolies, and how notorious it is that a large proportion of the people introduced into the West Indies, Englishmen as well as Coolies, do fall a sacrifice to the use of ardent spirits, I cannot see why a Secretary of State should disparage by his veto a regulation to discourage drunkenness amongst the Coolies. Then I come to the question of the loan proposed by the Government; and here I cannot help regretting that to that loan has been given an exclusive direction in favour of immigration alone. It is plain now that a very great variety of circumstances prevail in the different colonies as to the amount of immigration that is required, and also the greatest diversity of opinion amongst the best informed persons as to the amount. I think the mind of the West Indian people is quite sufficiently directed to the subject of immigration relatively to other countries, and I must confess, without at all presuming to form a conclusive judgment upon a subject which would require fuller information than I possess, I think it is doubtful indeed whether it would not be wise to include the improvement of the cultivation of the West Indies amongst the objects to which any grant of public money—for I do not shrink from that idea—might be applied in the West Indies. I have avowed that to a demand for money I think the West Indies are entitled; and I believe that, whatever the hon. Member for Manchester may think, the House of Commons will not be disinclined to acknowledge it. Then I come to what is a very important question, although it is scarcely a matter of general legislation in this House. I wish I had heard in the speech of the noble Lord some assurance with respect to the intentions of the Government to afford to the Legislatures of the West India colonies a very free management at least of their own financial affairs. When reference was made by the hon. Member for Coventry to the enlargement of the constitutional powers of the colonies, the noble Lord referred to the difficulties arising out of the difference of race in those colonies; and it is impossible not to feel that there is much in that circumstance to check the application of those principles you have acknowledged, and are acknowledging from day to day, with respect to the other colonies of the Crown; but as regards the expenditure of the public money, I should be glad to see far greater liberty given to the colonial authorities than they now possess. Here are certain papers relative to British Guiana. There have been conflicts in that colony between the Government and the Colonial Legislature. The Legislative Council of the colony says, that one-third of the exported produce is swallowed up in the expenses of the colonial government. Now it is impossible to look at the returns lately made of the expenses of the various colonial governments, without observing the immense difference in the expenditure between those colonies where they have assemblies, and those where they have no assembly. The expenditure in Jamaica, with a population of 400,000, is 289,000*l.* In British Guiana, with a population of 126,000, the amount is 269,000*l.*, of which nearly 200,000*l.* is independent of immigration; but in Barbadoes, the expense to that colony, with its assembly, for the government, is only 53,000*l.* Running through the list of colonies, there is much greater economy in those colonies where they have a colonial assembly; and it is therefore presumable that in giving to the colonies more liberty in managing their own affairs, there would be a reduction in the expense, to the great relief of those who are engaged in growing the exported produce, upon whom a large proportion of the tax must fall; and I do not hesitate to say, that being ready to grant money for the relief of the West Indies, I think there is one way in which it appears to me that the money might be usefully granted. If you give to the colonies more power over the expenditure, it is obvious that the official salaries will become the subject of consideration, and whether they cannot be reduced. Now, I think that the salaries of the governors cannot with propriety be reduced. It is necessary that you should place in those offices persons of high station, intelligence, and character, upon whom you can thoroughly rely. It is therefore necessary that they should be paid by a high salary; but I am by no means sure that it would not be a wise economy, if you grant money to the West Indies, to throw upon the consolidated fund the payment of the salaries of the governors during the number of years this exceptional measure will be in operation. I think I have said enough of my view of what a measure of this kind ought to be to make the House understand that I do not wish to shelter myself under vague generalities when I speak of the measure of the Government being less than the necessity demands; but, on the other hand, it would not be fitting for me to venture to pronounce an opinion on the details of such a measure, which can only belong to those who have the advantage of official position, and the means of official information. I therefore pass from that part of the subject to another, upon which I confess I touch with less pleasure, and that is the financial aspect of the present proposition. I do feel that this plan, as it stands, is open, on financial grounds, to insuperable difficulties. In the first place, it is obviously impolitic, if you believe that a sacrifice of money is about to be made. But my next objection is, that I think we are going to make, if we act on the statements made by the noble Lord, and particularly by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, a very much larger sacrifice of money than we have been allowed to know. I speak of the mere argument; but I differ *toto cœlo* from the argument of the right hon. Gentleman with respect to the financial effect of his measure; and I think he greatly—I might almost say ludicrously—underrates the burden it will impose upon the country. I question the right hon. Gentleman's estimates as to the increase of consumption in the present year; and I question his right, if it takes place, to attribute it to the operation of the measure of 1846. In the financial statement which the right hon. Gentleman made at the commencement of the Session, he took that increase into consideration, and therefore we are not to inquire now whether there will be that increase of consumption or not, but whether, as the measure of the Government will obviously make a sacrifice of revenue in the first instance, that sacrifice will be repaired by bringing about an increase of consumption. As to the general question of an increase of consumption, I entirely dispute the grounds upon which this increase has been assumed by the Government. The noble Lord quoted a number of years in which there were great variations in the price of sugar; and in consequence of these variations, or in connexion with them, there was a large increase or decrease of the consumption; and I say, that when even a small variation is made in the price, you have no right to look for an increase in the consumption. When my right hon. Friend the Member for the University of Cambridge was Chancellor of the Exchequer, he took off 3*s*. per cwt. of the duty, reducing it from 27*s*. to 24*s*.; and what was the increase of consumption? I believe 1,000 tons. The noble Lord said there would be a considerable change in the consumption attending a large change in price; but even if we take this as the measure of consumption, I find it very rarely happens that there is such a corresponding increase. What right, then, has the Government to say that we are going to reduce the duty 1*s*., the first effect of which will be, it is true, to take away some 240,000*l*., but by the increase of the consumption there will be no loss to you resulting from this measure? The right hon. Gentleman (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) has therefore no right to anticipate an increase of consumption from a reduction of 1*s*. in a price of about 40*s*. But he may have a right to anticipate this great increase of consumption on other grounds. If that should be the case, you have no right to take the credit of it for your measures; but I think this result will not occur. The right hon. Gentleman refers the House to the years 1845, 1846, and 1847; and because he finds an arithmetical progression in the consumption of sugar in those years, he calculates upon a somewhat similar increase in 1848. He says we must have an increase of 20,000 tons of sugar in the present year. Now, there has been an increase of 2,000 tons in the first four months of the present year; but the right hon. Gentleman must calculate upon a decrease in the foreign sugar consumed, and a decrease in the amount of duty received thereupon. But these first four months do not fairly represent the case, because it is a comparison of a term of low price with a period of high price. The average price of sugar during the first four months of last year was 34*s.* 6*d.*; during the last eight months of last year it was 25*s.* and 26*s.*; and during the first four months of the present year it was 24*s.* So that in comparing the first four months of this year and last, you have to take into account a reduction of 10*s.* 6*d.* in the price. The right hon. Gentleman does not estimate that for the next eight months prices will be higher than last year. The price last year was 25*s.* or 26*s.*, and he expects that during the remainder of the present year the price will be about the same. I know that this is a dry and wearisome branch of the subject, but it really lies at the root of the case. Let it not be said that the reduction of duty will bring about an increase of consumption. The truth is that we are going to lose 400,000*l.* next year, if the Government plan should be adopted, because we have no right to anticipate an increase of consumption. The duty is not the duty on the entire amount that comes to the market, but the duty on the protected article is that which you are going to reduce, and you are really going to increase the duty on the foreign article. The tendency will be to a diminution of consumption rather than an increase. Having sufficiently wearied the House with this part of the question, I now propose to look at the financial view of the subject. The sum of about 240,000*l.* will be sacrificed in the first year by the reduction of the duty on the colonial articles; you are also going to prohibit the use of sugar in breweries, which may be stated to consume 12,000 tons, and which will cause a loss of 150,000*l.*, making, altogether, a loss to the revenue of 400,000*l.* If your plan has a tendency to discourage the consumption of foreign sugar, which it probably will do, the revenue will suffer still more, and what it loses in this way next year it will lose on a larger scale in successive years. This duty on foreign sugar is likewise to be increased in future years, and you are, in point of fact, about to impose a heavy burden upon the finances of the country. I cannot bring myself to view this question without regarding its relation to the finances of the country at the present moment. We have a large loan recently contracted for the relief of Irish distress. We have a deficiency of 3,000,000*l.* on the estimates of last year, and a deficiency of about 2,005,000*l.* on the estimates of the present year. We are now asked to vote 400,000*l.* more of the public money, and we are further asked to consent to a larger sacrifice of revenue from this source in future years, before we have fulfilled our first and primary duty of making provision for the sound and healthy condition of the Exchequer. Now I do not inquire, at the present moment, whether it must be by increased taxation or by a reduction of expenditure that the income and expenditure of the country are to be equalised. But the question of your financial position is a most serious one, and it is becoming more serious every day. I say, then, that we shall not be doing our duty to the country without showing that we have not neglected this subject of public economy, and that we do not return to our constituents without having given them the first fruits of the measures by which we propose to restore the revenue to a state of sufficiency and of equalisation with the expenditure. I am not prepared to vote, then, for the plan of the Government —involving, as it will, a loss of 240,000*l.* from loss of duty on sugar, and 150,000*l.* from the prohibition of the use of sugar in breweries—without having a clear indication of what the intentions of the Government are, and not only an indication of their intentions, but also the proof that they are taking the steps necessary to place us on the road for fulfilling their intentions. In making these financial objections to their plan, I do not urge them to postpone the measures which they and which I myself think necessary for the West Indies—I do not mean a postponement for a week, but for a Session. As I have said, I think it our first duty to take care to provide the means out of which the relief is to be given, and that it ought not to be our endeavour, in order to make our measures more popular, to reduce the duty on sugar, and thus to increase our financial embarrassments, which are already, in my opinion, of the most formidable character. In the present position of affairs, our first measure is to restore the due relation between public income and public expenditure; and, secondly, to do that which our duty requires from the relation in which we stand to our West Indian colonies. I know that legislation for classes is justly unpopular, and that when the hon. Member for Manchester exposes me, as he will no doubt do, for saying, as I have done in plain words, that money ought to be given to the West Indian colonies, the hon. Member will be representing a feeling which has great support out of doors. But it is necessary also to meet the argument that this claim of the West Indies is one of justice, one of compensation, one for losses and injuries inflicted, and one which we are bound to acknowledge; and, if so, do not let us fear any unpopularity. Do not let it be said that the plan of emancipation, mighty and gigantic as it was, was based upon the ruin of private fortunes, and that while it overspread the whole world with its fame we took the glory upon ourselves, that we laid the burden on the West Indies, and left the debt to posterity. Let us not shrink from the burden that our own shoulders ought to bear—let us not shrink from making the return which is due to the colonies, and necessary to complete the work of regeneration for the negro race by whom they are inhabited. It is not to court favour with the West Indies that I oppose the reduction of the duty on sugar, but because it imposes a burden upon our Exchequer, which has no strength to bear it. Let us not shrink from maintaining those financial principles which are at the root of all faith in public affairs. Whatever interests we may sacrifice, whatever popularity we may lose, let us not sacrifice the interests of the public revenue, but study to maintain at that high standard which it ought to hold that condition of public income and credit which is absolutely necessary in order to uphold the commercial system, the revenue, the trade, and the employment of the country.

Mr. JAMES WILSON said, that he had listened with considerable interest and no little surprise to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. When he (Mr. Wilson) heard the early part of that speech, he thought the right hon. Gentleman was disposed to vote for the general propositions before the House; but he then heard the grounds which the right hon. Gentleman stated induced him to take the course which he intended to follow on this question. The right hon. Gentleman objected to the course taken by Her Majesty's Government on this occasion. First of all, he objected to the mode in which it was proposed to give a continuance of protection to the colonies; but it did not appear that he was prepared to increase the amount of protection; but he thought he could show that, by the plan proposed, it would in this respect be satisfactory. The right hon. Gentleman, in voting for the Amendment, said that this amount of relief was not sufficient; but he did not think the right hon. Gentleman made out his case on this ground; for although it might be less in amount than he would ask for, still it was to be apportioned in a way which would remove many burdens from the colonies. The next part of the proposition with which the right hon. Gentleman did not agree, was not to the amount of the loan, but to the application of the loan. He thought he could satisfy the House that there was no other mode in which the loan could be made effective for the benefit of the West Indies, and any other mode must be attended with so much delay, if carried out at all, that it would not have any effect in the present crisis, or that it would tend in any way to induce a return of confidence, With regard to this as a question of finance, he was fully prepared to meet the right hon. Gentleman's objection. The right hon. Gentleman had viewed on all points and in various lights the subject-matter before the House. If they took the interest of the revenue on the one side, and looked to the interest of the consumer on the other, he (Mr. Wilson) thought he should be able to show that while it was least oppressive to the one, it would prove most advantageous to the other; and he confessed he should be glad if no objections of a more grave character than those of the right hon. Gentleman could be urged against the measure. The basis of the Amendment was the amount of relief, and it went on to show that it was not sufficient to meet the emergency of the case. It would be in the recollection of many hon. Members who heard him, that the meaning of that Amendment was to carry the amount of protection to 10*s*., as recommended by the Committee, of which he had the honour of being a Member. No one could entertain greater respect for the decision of that Committee than himself; and he could say, during the three months of its sitting, nothing could exceed the conduct of the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck), the Chairman of that Committee, and other Members opposite, who were members of it, for they most fully and fairly discussed every subject that came before them. He might also add, that although several West Indian proprietors were members of it, he never saw any desire on their part to take any advantage for themselves, and he completely exonerated them from every such charge. He therefore entertained the greatest respect for the Committee as to the mode in which that inquiry had been carried on; and also as to the mode in which they adopted the resolution, although he was not disposed to assent to such a recommendation as they had agreed to. The proposition before the House was mainly to recommend the adoption of a 10*s.* protecting duty, and the leaving all the other matters out of consideration. The right hon. Member for Cambridge and himself had supported a resolution which involved other important objects of relief; but this was successfully opposed, and then the resolution recommending the raising the protection to 10*s.* was adopted. On looking to the form in which the Amendment was proposed, it was clear that it was impossible to view it in any other light than a simple proposition to return to a 10*s.* protecting duty on colonial sugar. They had heard much in the course of the debate of the great list of West Indian grievances. He was sure several hon. Gentlemen opposite knew that he had long been an ardent advocate for the removal of restrictions of every kind which fell upon them; and when free trade was adopted in this country, he had contended for the removal of every restriction which pressed on the colonies. One restriction had been removed after another, and anxiety was constantly manifested on the part of the Government to remove every cause of complaint; but still the West Indians had always returned to protection. In looking through the reports of the West India body, which for the most part were drawn up in an able manner, they would find a great number of grievances specified. First, there was a complaint that the West Indians were obliged to take their lumber and provisions from this country, or from the British colonies. The right hon. Gentleman (Sir Robert Peel) in 1844 removed a number of those restrictions, and, amongst others, the one to which he had just alluded. The colonies had also been enabled to obtain foreign manufactured goods by the removal of the differential duty. Then the duty on rum had been reduced from 1*s.* 6*d.* a gallon, to 9*d.*, and now it was proposed to reduce it further to 4*d.* a gallon. This was equivalent to a large reduction of the duty on sugar. It had been calculated that the recent reduction of the duty of 1*s.* 1*d.* would be equivalent to the reduction of from 3*s.* to 3*s.* 6*d.* per cwt. on sugar. There was a complaint in the Mauritius of the export duties imposed upon sugar. He (Mr. Wilson), in the Committee of which he had the honour to be a member, moved a resolution to the effect that all these duties should be removed; but it was rejected, and the Committee adhered to the single resolution of a 10*s.* protection duty. The privilege of refining in bond was an advantage to all those colonies in which there was a scarcity of labour. With regard to the question of labour, it had been argued as if the importation of free labour had been altogether prohibited. He (Mr. Wilson) did not intend to go into the question of labour; but hon. Gentlemen did not seem to know that as early as 1840 there was an importation of free labour into the colonies; and that in 1843 Lord Stanley had sanctioned the admission of Coolie labourers from India to the West Indies. So that in fact there was no prohibition. There was no single complaint, no ground of distress, put forward, excepting only the demand for increased protection, which had not been satisfied in some degree. But he was perfectly willing to admit, with the right hon. Gentleman who had spoken last, that, although the restrictions had been removed, they had left a certain amount of debility behind them, and that, therefore, the House was called upon to endeavour to give relief in some shape. But the only question was, in what way that relief should be given so judiciously as to be productive of advantage to this country and to the colonists themselves. Now, the distress was admitted on all hands; but as to the causes, they were not so completely agreed. He knew that it was customary in that House, as it had been in the Committee, to allege that the distress was all to be attributed to the Act of 1846; but he should say that the influence of the Act of 1846 had been greatly exaggerated both by the witnesses before the Committee, and by those hon. Gentlemen who had spoken in the debate. A great effort had been made to prove that the Act of 1846 had been peculiarly prejudicial to the colonists, by showing the great losses which they had sustained by comparing the cost of raising their sugar with the prices they obtained for it in this market. Now, he believed the most exaggerated notions prevailed with regard to the exact amount of loss attributable to the Act of 1846. The low prices of last year had been made use of, and they had been much dwelt upon in the very able report of the Committee of which the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) was Chairman. But then he (Mr. Wilson) begged to say, that in the numerous and ably detailed statements which the noble Lord had worked out, the noble Lord had been, he believed, assisted by most competent gentlemen of the City—gentlemen of the highest integrity and honour—gentlemen known to him (Mr. Wilson), and in whom he would place the highest and most implicit confidence. And they were gentlemen not only of large experience and sagacity, but they were gentlemen of such intimate knowledge of the subject, that their statements were fairly entitled to the greatest consideration. Now the noble Lord had drawn up a statement in the report which he (Mr. Wilson) now held in his hand, in which he had shown the cost of cultivation of the sugar imported from our colonies in 1846, together with a calculation of the cost of freights and charges paid upon it, and also a calculation of the cost of brokerage, landing, and insurance. And he had thus made out 4,536,000*l.* to be the entire cost of the 159,000 tons imported and to be sold at the low prices of last year. And yet out of the whole 4,536,000*l.* the noble Lord made out a deficiency of only 170,000*l.* at the prices, low as they were, which would be a loss of only about 4½ per cent on the whole West India produce of last year. Surely hon. Members in that House would agree with him (Mr. Wilson) in saying that there was not a single interest in this country which had not sustained a loss during the last year of more than 4½ per cent. The noble Lord said, that, according to Mr. Greene's statement, there were 129,000 tons of colonial sugar sold, which brought 3,500,000*l.* at the market price, and which would show an apparent loss of 982,000*l.* But between 129,000 tons and 159,000, there was a difference of 30,000 tons, which must be still left to cover the loss. There was a very curious paper which he held in his hand. It was a very valuable document—it was a report from Jamaica, which gave a statement of the actual condition of a large number of estates—of sixty or seventy or eighty estates—with the precise produce of each—the quantity of sugar produced—the cost of production—the price of rum, and the cost of the sugar in each year, deducting the amount received for the rum. The inquiry showed that for the average of the two years 1846 and 1847, the cost of production was 22*s.* 7½*d.* per cwt.; but hon. Gentlemen should bear in mind that it was hardly fair to take an average of 1846 and 1847 as to the cost of growing sugar in the colonies. He begged their attention to the point, because it was one which would probably be referred to again during the debate; and it involved the deeply important question of whether we should ever successfully enable free labour to compete with slave labour—a question which he was sure every hon. Gentleman, without exception, looked to with the greatest interest, as being one of supreme importance. It was not fair to take 1846 and 1847 as years from which to draw an average, because 1846 was a year of unusual drought and short crops. He would refer upon that subject to a Parliamentary paper, presented some weeks ago, relating to Jamaica. It appeared by that paper that the quantity of sugar grown in the West Indies in 1845 was 742,000 cwts., in 1846 it was 572,000 cwts., in 1847 it was 751,000 cwts. He did not think, therefore, that it was exactly fair to take an average of the two years as to the cost of production. He had taken the case of the sugar produced in 1847 in the whole of the island of Jamaica upon fifty-two estates referred to in the reports of the Jamaica Committee, and it amounted to 143,000 cwt., the cost of which was 192,000*l.* The rum produced 72,000*l.*, deducting which from the cost of the sugar, will give a net cost of 16*s.* 9*d.* per cwt. for the sugar. But on several estates the cost of production was as low as 4*s.* 4*d.*, 6*s.*, 9*s.*, 10*s.*, and 11*s.* per cwt., taking into account the entire contingencies. He thought, therefore, in referring to the present state of the colonies, and their condition last year, they were not borne out by the facts in attributing their losses to the low price of sugar. He believed, that with regard to the distresses of Jamaica and of the West Indies altogether, a very large portion of the cause was attributable to the small crops of 1846; for he found that on several estates the cost of production in that year was enormous. They would find, on looking to those returns, that on some estates the cost was as high as 3*l.* 18*s.* 3*d.* the cwt., on others it was 3*l.* 17*s.*, and on others, 6*l.* 19*s.*, in consequence of the shortness of the crops. He perfectly admitted the distress as existing, and he had thus endeavoured to show some reason for its existence. But they had been told by the hon. Baronet who opened the debate, that the distress had been comparatively unknown before 1846. He (Mr. Wilson) did not mean to refer to the complaints that had been made before 1846, but he should just beg to remark that in the seventh volume of the report of our own Committee, they had statements of the estates in Demerara and Essequibo which had been sold under executions; and it appeared that in 1847 there were nine estates sold under execution. In 1846 there were thirteen. But as the hon. Baronet thought there was no distress existing before 1846, he should tell him that whereas there had been only nine estates sold under execution in 1847, and thirteen in 1846; there were twenty-one sold under execution in 1845, and in 1844 there were fourteen, whilst in 1843 there were eighteen. So that there were actually fewer estates sold under execution during the last two years, than there had been ordinarily for some years before. But he might be asked to what he did refer the present distress of the West Indies? In reply, he should very much like to refer to the circulars of those who were most immediately connected with the trade. He should like to refer to the circulars of the sugar brokers of London, Liverpool, and Glasgow, no one of whom referred to the Act of 1846 as any cause of the distress. All of them stated that in consequence of the measures admitting sugar to the uses of breweries and distilleries, a large speculation had arisen, and the consequence had been the large introduction of foreign and East India sugar to supply the demand which was expected to have followed. To that the sugar brokers added the great pressure on the money market, which compelled the holders of sugar to sell their stocks at any loss. Now, he could not overlook altogether the evidence of these men. The hon. Baronet the Member for Essex (Sir F. Buxton), when addressing the House, and speaking of the large quantity of foreign sugar which had been imported, said that in future years they should expect still larger supplies. It might be some consolation to the hon. Baronet to know that in the present year as compared with the last, the importation of slave-grown sugar had been materially reduced. In the first four months of last year the quantity of foreign sugar imported into this country was 26,000 tons. In the first four months of the present year there were only imported 11,000 tons. Again, there were taken into consumption in the first four months of the past year 22,000 tons. In the first four months of the present year there were only consumed of this sugar 12,000 tons. In the first four months of 1847, there were exported from Cuba for this market, 79,000 boxes of sugar. In the corresponding period of 1848 there were only 8,000 boxes. Not that the entire shipment of sugar from Cuba had fallen off, for it was nearly the same this year that it had been last year, thereby showing that the export to this country had been stimulated during the last year. The general exports from Cuba, from the 1st of January to the 30th of April, 1847, were 361,000 boxes. This year, in the corresponding period, they were 353,000 boxes, so that it would be seen the entire number of boxes exported had not materially diminished. He had already alluded to the failure of the crops in 1846. And if hon. Gentlemen would have taken the trouble to look into those Parliamentary returns they would have discovered a good deal both of interesting and instructive matter in them regarding the complaints of the colonies, and the course of legislation which had been adopted towards them during the last fifteen years. He was ready to admit all that hon. Gentlemen said about the course of legislation in 1834 and 1838, and those measures which were then carried by that House and the country with the very best motives; but which had nevertheless been adopted indiscreetly and rashly, and which were contrary to the best interests of the colonies, and of the classes who were to have been (it was hoped) benefited by them. He believed that it would have been better for the negro population if their emancipation had taken place more gradually, and they had been brought progressively to a state of independent industry with more care than had been used. In 1834 the whole produce of the colonies was 3,800,000 cwt. He found a gradual decrease until 1841 (when the sugar colonies appeared to have been in a state of the greatest depression), when the produce was 2,100,000 cwt. But from that up to the present time, with the exception of 1846, he found a gradual and rapid increase in the quantity. He did not take the gloomy view that some hon. Gentlemen took of the condition of the West Indian colonies. He saw in the facts before him, and in the evidence which he there saw, great sources of hope for the colonies; and he believed the turn in their affairs had taken place. He should show, not only that the colonies had seen their worst times, but that they had opened sources of increasing prosperity. [*A laugh.*] Hon. Gentlemen might laugh at this statement if they pleased; but he was discharging what he believed to be his duty to them as well as to the West Indies. He had stated that he found a gradual decrease from 1834 to 1841, and the reason was clear to any one who would take the trouble to look into the matter. He held in his hand a very valuable document. It was a book which contained the evidence taken before a similar Committee to that which had been appointed by the House of Assembly of Jamaica. It was taken in Trinidad, in 1841, and there were a few passages in that evidence that were so instructive, so enlightening on the question before the House with regard to labour, that he would beg to read them. The great complaint in 1841 was that of insufficient labour. The Sub-committee of that Agricultural and Emigration Committee had before them the question of wages, and the cost of labour in the colony; and Mr. Burnley, the Chairman of that Committee, came to this country expressly for the purpose of promoting the inquiry which was instituted here in 1842, of which Committee the hon. Member for Droitwich was the Chairman. In the evidence taken before the Trinidad Committee, he found the following:—

> "The question was asked of one witness, 'Were the expenses greater now than previous to the emancipation?' and the answer was, 'Yes, greatly.' He was then asked, 'Had not their revenue increased in proportion, in consequence of the rise in sugar in 1840, as compared with 1838 and 1839?' and he said, 'By no means, it was decidedly less in 1840.' The next question was, 'Do you consider that the increase of price had only the effect of raising the price of labour, and that it was but of little benefit to the planters?' and the answer was, 'Decidedly so.' Another gentleman accounted for the fact of wages having gradually risen instead of having fallen, to the continued competition for labour among the planters, coupled with the gradual rise in the price of sugar."

The evidence before the Committee distinctly showed this, that the cultivation of sugar was carried on at a considerable loss, and yet during the whole of that year the average price of sugar in bond was 48*s.*, and yet this high price, instead of being thought an advantage, was declared by the witnesses to have been a decided disadvantage. Now when this evidence from Trinidad was sent to him, it was accompanied by a letter from the hon. Gentleman who had acted as Chairman of that Committee, in which there was one passage with which he would beg leave to trouble the House. [The hon. Member read an extract from the letter to the effect, that up to the present period they had been supporting high protective duties, which rendered sugar twice as dear in England as elsewhere, thereby convincing foreigners that they were on the wrong road, and the effect of which conferred little benefit on the planters, and only went to increase the rate of wages, and diminish the quantity of work performed.] That letter was written by the brother-in-law of the hon. Member for Montrose, who now sought for higher protection for the West Indian colonies; and yet they had, then, his own brother-in-law objecting to protection, as a matter which conferred no benefit on the colonists. But they had undoubtedly duties to perform to the colonists, and the question to consider was, how could they perform those duties with the least cost to this country, and with the most benefit to the colonies. His belief was that they could not, in the long run, do a worse thing for the colonies than to secure protection to them. Were hon. Members aware of the exertions that had been latterly made to effect an arrangement between the employers and the employed in these colonies, for the reduction of the price of labour from the enormous rate to which it had reached in 1841, and of the success which had attended those struggles? He held in his hand a paper, which showed the reductions that had been effected in the rate of wages in various places, and he found by it that in Barbadoes the cost of labour had been reduced from 1*s.* to 5*d.* a day. In Antigua the reduction had been from 8*d.* to 6*d.*; in Guiana labour had deceased 25 per cent. ["No, no!"] An hon. Member said "No;" but he must beg to say "Yes." He had the evidence before him to prove that the facts were as he stated. In other islands the cost of labour had been reduced from 25 to 50 per cent; and he would ask would it be wise in that House to increase now the amount of protection?—a change which, as the hon. Member for Leominster had told them, would become known to the negroes by the first packet, and thus in the midst of the struggle that was going forward, to give an excuse to them to raise again the demand for wages which they had so recently and so unwillingly relinquished. He believed that nothing could be more prejudicial to the colonies than such a course. But supposing that they were to follow the advice of hon. Gentlemen opposite, and increase the duty on foreign sugar, what would be the effect? The first effect would be not only to increase the cost of raising sugar in the colonies, by increasing the rate of wages that would have to be paid, but also to increase the cost to the consumer at home, and, as a necessary consequence, to decrease the quantity consumed. The effect of a reduction in the consumption, would necessarily be in the long run to decrease the price. The consumption during the last year had risen to an unprecedented amount, but it did not rise more than the supply. But any disturbance which would raise the duty, would inevitably raise the price of sugar and lessen the consumption, and thus injure the revenue. The great difficulty which they had to deal with in the colonies, was the large amount of production of which they were capable, compared with any possible demand that they could ultimately look for in this market. In the last year the production of the British colonies amounted to 292,000 tons weight of sugar, while the consumption in this country amounted to very nearly the same quantity. Now, it was clear that if they were to increase their production beyond the quantity consumed in the home market, they would have to send the remainder to the European markets; and the moment that they sent any portion whatever of their sugar into the general market of Europe, the effect would be to bring down the price in this country to the level of other markets. All the witnesses examined before the Committee, admitted that the inevitable consequence of a greater supply of sugar in the colonies than would be taken by the home market, would be to bring down the price of sugar generally to the level of Continental markets, which were supplied from Cuba and Brazil. He would ask hon. Gentlemen who found so much fault with the Acts of 1844, 1845, and 1846, to consider for one moment the position in which they would have been placed at this moment if those Acts had not been passed. He believed that he could show them that they were greatly indebted to the Sugar Act of 1845 in particular, for not having their position much more aggravated at the present moment than it was. By that Act of 1845 the duty on colonial sugar was reduced from 24*s.* to 14*s.*, and on foreign sugar from 34*s.* to 23*s.* 4*d.* The consequence of this decreased charge was a reduction of price and an increase in the consumption, which had gradually gone on up to the present time. The result was that whereas the consumption was but 200,000 tons a year at that period, it increased last year to 290,000 tons. Now supposing they had continued the rate of duty of 24*s.* and 23*s.* that prevailed up to 1841, and that they had thus succeeded in excluding entirely foreign sugar from this market, what, he would ask, would have been their position now when their own production had risen to 290,000 tons, whereas the average consumption in this country under the high duties ranged from only 207,000 to 210,000 tons? If the consumption increased so rapidly within the last few years, it could only be attributed to the greatly diminished price, which greatly diminished price could only be attributed to the diminution of duty and to the introduction of foreign sugar to a small extent. But if in 1847 they had a suddenly increased supply of 70,000 tons of sugar more than in the preceding year, what would have been the effect when 40,000 or 50,000 tons of that quantity must have gone to the Continental markets? Would it not be that during the past year they would have been exposed to free competion with Cuban and Brazilian sugar? The Bills of 1845 and 1846 had the effect, however, of gradually increasing the consumption in this country, so as during the past year to make it equal the increased supply. But how much more strongly would this view appear, when they recollected what the capabilities of the colonies were; when they recollected, that in the island of Trinidad alone, about one-seventh of the soil would be fully capable of supplying the whole of the British Islands with sugar; and that there was at this moment one million of acres of Crown lands in that colony, wholly unoccupied. When they considered, farther, the vast supply that was capable of being raised in British Guiana—and still more, when they considered the vast settlements which they held in the East Indies capable of being devoted to the production of sugar—when they considered these facts, how, he would ask, could they look forward to maintaining any increased protection in the market of this country? No man could have sat upon the Committee and not have come to the conclusion, that whatever protection was given to the colonies, that protection must, by the effect of other measures which had been passed, be accompanied by supplies to a much larger extent, and that there was no possible safety but in viewing the colonies as exposed to the competition of the world. Unless we based our legislation in relation to this fact, whatever we did would prove fallacious—a deception and a delusion. With these views it was impossible for him to recommend the adoption of the Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for Droitwich, inasmuch as it would tend to raise the price of sugar, whilst operating prejudicially upon the revenue. It was on all grounds a dangerous and delusive proposition. He now came to the proposition of the Government. The first point the Government had to consider was to give permanent encouragement to the cultivation and the increased consumption of sugar. The cultivation would be encouraged; and with regard to the consumption, he called the attention of the House to the result of the measure proposed by the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) in 1845. It was a fact that in the three years between 1845 and 1848, by the reduction of the duty, the consumption had been raised from 207,000 tons to 290,000 tons. Considering that the colonists required protection in their transition state, he considered the Government had acted wisely in reducing the duties on West India sugars gradually. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford had found fault with the mode in which this protection was granted; but what was his proposition? To maintain the present rate for six years, and then let it cease. The right hon. Gentleman knew, however, that price must be regulated by the foreign and not by the colonial duty, and consequently the consumption during the whole of that period must remain the same, and thus he would not have provided for an increased growth in the colonies. The right hon. Gentleman also objected to the descending scale, because it would infuse into commercial transactions a certain degree of insecurity. His plan, however, was more open to that censure than that of the Government. Nor would the Government measure prejudice the revenue, as the right hon. Gentleman contended for. What had been the effect of a reduction in the scales during the last two years? A large advantage to the revenue. He held that the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman would be infinitely less satisfactory in this respect than that of the Government. The hon. Member would not lower the duty to the West Indies, which the present proposed plan of the Government would do. He would not increase the revenue, which the plan of the Government would also do. Under these circumstances he did not think for a moment that either a merchant, a consumer, or a Chancellor of the Exchequer could hesitate as to the plan which ought to be adopted. With respect to the interest of the consumer, it was quite clear that the higher duty must be the duty which regulated the price. As the scale proposed by the Government would descend year by year, so the price would also descend to the consumer in the same proportion, while the protection to the producer will be equal in amount to that proposed by the hon. Gentleman, and even of longer duration. So that protection to the West Indian producer, as well as the interests of the consumer, were better provided for by the plan of the Government, than by the scheme of the hon. Gentleman. The consumer would year after year have the advantage of the descending scale, and the consumption would be in proportion to the reduction of the price; so that by an increased consumption they could make good anything which had been lost by reason of the diminished duty from colonial sugar. With regard to the slight alteration which had taken place in the scale of duties as fixed by the Act of 1846, he had to say that no one could have heard the evidence brought before the Committee without being convinced that there was a practical inequality in our present scale; the whole of the foreign sugars imported being of a high quality, while those of the colonies were of a low. It would only be an act of justice to the West Indies to remove this inequality. With regard then to the scale of duties as fixed in 1846, there would be little or no alteration, except as far as regarded this unintentional inequality. He considered it was right that they should alter to the least possible extent the laws regulating their duties; but he did consider that no alteration could have been made which would more fully meet the views of the right hon. Gentleman and the objects of the Government, than that which was proposed. The whole of the duties would remain precisely as they were fixed by the Act of 1846, excepting the duty upon brown clayed sugar, which would be raised by 1*s.* 6*d.* per cwt. The Government had received several complaints from gentlemen who sent orders to purchase sugar in Cuba and Bahia on the faith of the anticipated reductions on the 5th of July next. Now he would ask what would have been the state of the case if the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxford had been acceded to? Would there not have been a larger ground for complaint, for the loss would not have occurred only upon one particular kind of sugar, but upon the whole of the sugars imported? An objection had been made by the hon. Baronet (Sir J. Pakington) against the reduction on clayed sugar, on the ground that the foreign planter would introduce brown clayed and pass it off as muscovado; and he expressed an apprehension that thus what was intended for an advantage to the colonies would confer none at all. He, however, was glad to tell the hon. Baronet the arrangements which were proposed to be made rendered such a proceeding impossible. There would be two standards of sugar—one for muscovado and one for brown clayed; and sugars above the standard would have to pay the higher duty. The Member for the University of Oxford said that they would be taking a retrograde step by excluding the use of sugar in breweries; and a very general impression prevailed in the City that it was the intention of the Government to exclude sugar from breweries. But the Government had no such intention. What the Chancellor of the Exchequer stated was this, that when sugar was admitted into breweries at a duty of 14*s.* per cwt., it was, in point of revenue, quite equal to the duty upon malt; and that when the duty fell below 12*s.*, he would then be obliged to exclude sugar from breweries—not from distilleries—or fall upon some other mode of remedying the inequality which would be occasioned to the revenue. But that would not come into operation for three years, when the duty would fall to 11*s.* And that would, at all events, be but a question of time. With regard to the rum duties, he had already remarked that the various changes which had been made upon this article, had been productive of very great practical relief to the West Indian colonies. The reduction now proposed was equal on the rum exported from Jamaica in the course of last year to 50,000*l.*; and if they added the reduction which had taken place within the last two years, it would give an increased income to the colonies of no less a sum than 300,000*l.* or 400,000*l.* on the quantity of rum exported from the colonies. He had not the pleasure of listening to the speech of the hon. Baronet (Sir J. Pakington), but he had read the report of the speech, and he learned that the hon. Gentleman stated, that by the evidence received before the Committee, the average cost of the production of sugar in the slave-growing colonies was, in Cuba, 6*s.* 8*d.* per cwt.; in Porto Rico, 5*s.* 2*d.*; and in Bahia, 5*s.* 9*d.*; making an average cost of 6*s.* 10½*d.* per cwt. He was exceeedingly surprised that such a statement should have been made, because it was fresh in his recollection that they had evidence before them which led to very different results. He found at page 366 in the seventh report of the Committee, a letter from Mr. Crawford, consul-general at Havana. The result of his statement was, that sugar cost one penny three-sevenths per lb., or 13*s.* 4*d.* per cwt. But he said further, that that included nothing for the interest of capital and the other costs of replacing of slaves—a most important item in slavegrowing countries. He said still further, that in addition to that cost, there was a tax something like a tithe, which amounted to 2*s.* per 100 lbs. or 2*s.* 2*d.* per cwt., making the cost of the sugar 15*s.* 6*d.* per cwt. He further added that there was an export duty upon that sugar of 2*s.* a cwt., making the cost of sugar 17*s.* 6*d.* per cwt., irrespective altogether of shipping charges, merchants' commission, and other charges incidental to shipping the produce. Now, that statement of Mr. Commissioner Crawford was wonderfully corroborated by the evidence of a gentleman, a trader, who had lived in Havana for many years, and who was well acquainted both with the Continental and the British markets. The result of that gentleman's calculations, given at page 5 of the seventh report, was, that the cost of producing sugar upon unencumbered estates was 15*s.* 3*d.* per cwt., and upon estates encumbered with debt 19*s.* 4*d.* per cwt. Next with regard to Bahia, Mr. Porter, the consul, stated the total cost of production at 16*s.* 5*d.* per cwt. The export duty was 7 per cent in addition to that, and there were also all the other charges connected with the shipping and conveying of the produce to the market, of which he was unable to give an estimate; but he made the cost at Bahia 17*s.* 6*d.* per cwt. Then in Porto Rico, Mr. Lindegren, the consul, made the cost of production 12*s.* 6*d.* a cwt., without any charge for loss of slaves and interest on capital. He should here observe that that cost of 12*s.* 6*d.*

was upon a small portion of the richest ground in the world for producing sugar. It produced between 26 cwt. and 35 cwt. per acre—a quantity he believed not equalled in any other part of the world. The average, then, of those three countries, instead of being, as the hon. Baronet had stated it, 6*s.* 10½*d.*, was no less than 15*s.* 10*d.* per cwt.; and if it were taken altogether, irrespective of the export duties which were charged by the respective Governments, and might be said to a certain extent to be optional, the average cost of those three slave-producing countries would be found to be 14*s.* 8*d.* per cwt. That average cost comprised three qualities of sugar, namely, 3-12ths of white sugar, which went almost exclusively to Russia, 6-12ths of yellow, and 3-12ths of brown. With regard to slave labour, he would trouble the House for an instant with what he was sure they would consider a most gratifying statement made by Mr. Lindegren, the consul at Porto Rico. That gentleman said—

> "From that abatement, compared with that of slave labour, it appears that the cost of free labour is about one-fifth more only than that of slave labour. One, however, of the principal proprietors of estates in the island who employ both free labour and slaves, says, that taking into consideration the feeding, the clothing, the interest on capital, the life assurance, and loss of time from sickness and other causes, he does not consider that there is any difference in any work done by slaves and free labourers, and that the cost of each will be about the same; and that was, where the proprietor paid the people employed by him 1*s.* 6*d.* a day for field labour, and 2*s* a day in the boiling-house, where they worked longer."

Now, had the statement of the hon. Baronet the Member for Droitwich been true, he, (Mr. Wilson) for one, would have been disposed to have relinquished the whole of this case as the most impracticable and difficult and forlorn that could be entertained with the view of benefiting the colonies. If it had been true that sugar could have been produced in slave-grown countries, at the average rate quoted by the hon. Baronet, then he must say that he could not have entertained any hope in any reasonable time of free labour being able to compete with slave labour; and he thought it must be a matter of great consolation to those who looked forward to the period when free labour should be exposed to the competition with slave labour, and who were nevertheless as anxious as any could be to see slavery abolished, to perceive that the average cost of producing sugar in the island of Jamaica last year was no more than he had shown it to have been from the consular returns which he had quoted in Cuba and South America. Upon this question of slavery he must say that he was a good deal surprised the other evening to hear the hon. Baronet the Member for Essex (Sir E. N. Buxton), a strong free-trader in other respects, object to this proposition of the Government, because it encouraged slavery, and yet not object to cotton and coffee, the productions of the United States of America, because, he said, there was no slave trade there. He (Mr. Wilson), however, asserted—and it could not be denied—that a slave trade most indubitably did exist with all its horrors, nay, in its very worst shape, in North America, and that the largest portion of the rice, cotton, and tobacco produced in that country was the result of slave labour. If hon. Gentlemen were willing to say that there was no difference in the two descriptions of slave trade, then he could not see on what grounds they could base their support of the introduction of slave-grown cotton, whilst they declined to introduce slave-grown sugar. He was obliged to omit a number of important points which he should have noticed if time had been allowed him; but he would not detain the House longer. If he had one feeling that was stronger than another—if he was desirous of seeing an end put to slavery and the slave trade—if he was desirous of seeing the British colonies raised from their present state of depression—if he had a strong desire to see these two great objects accomplished, then he most conscientiously believed that nothing could be more prejudicial to the one or the other than for the House to revert back to increased protection on sugar. He believed that by so doing you would only interfere with those measures which were now being taken in our colonies to reduce the cost of production; and he believed that you must rely upon the reduced cost of production as being the only means by which our colonies could be themselves restored to a state of prosperity, or by which the planter could hope successfully to compete with slave labour. He conscientiously entertained this opinion, and was quite sure that the Gentlemen who sat with him on the Committee would give him the credit of having paid every attention to the evidence of the witnesses they brought in—for he did not think it necessary to bring any witnesses—and say, that after that inquiry, if you had these two great objects at heart, there were no means by which you could permanently and successfully carry them out, but by persevering in the system which you had commenced, by which the cost of production in the colonies would be economised; by which sugar would be reduced in cost to the producer, and price to the consumer; and by which alone your own planter would be able to carry on a successful competition with his competitors in slave-grown countries.

Debate adjourned.

House adjourned at half-past One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, June 23, 1848.

MINUTES.] *Took the Oaths.*—The Lord Howden.

PUBLIC BILLS.—1ª Imprisonment for Debt (Ireland).

2ª Administration of Justice (No. 1); Administration of Justice (No. 2); Protection of Justices from Vexatious Actions; Joint Stock Companies.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Worcester, and a great number of other Places, in favour of the Health of Towns Bill.—From Hetton-le-Hole, and a great number of other Places, against the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on the Sabbath.—From Lewes, against the Public Health Bill, as it now stands, and for Alteration.—From Banff, for Facilitating the Attainment of Sites for Churches in Scotland.—From several Odd Fellows' Lodges, for the Extension of the Provisions of the Benefit Societies Act to that Order.—From Piddington, Hackleton, and Horton, against the Diplomatic Relations, Court of Rome, Bill.—From Commissioners of Supply of the County of Edinburgh, in favour of the Law of Entail (Scotland) Bill.—From Auchterarder, and several other Places, for the Rejection of the Marriage (Scotland) Bill, and the Registering Births, &c. (Scotland) Bill.

THE VISCOUNT ARBUTHNOTT.

The LORD CHANCELLOR called the attention of their Lordships to the indictments found against John Viscount Arbuthnott, certified into this House in pursuance of certain writs of *certiorari*, issued by the Lord Chancellor, and which, together with the said writs, were delivered at the bar of the House yesterday. It would be for their Lordships to determine what course should be taken upon the matter. He was himself of opinion that bills having been found, the subsequent proceedings should be conducted in the same way in which that House adopted proceedings against Peers. The practice in these cases had uniformly been to appoint a Committee to inspect the Journals of the House upon former trials of Peers in criminal cases, and to consider of the proper methods of proceeding, in order to bring the Viscount Arbuthnott to a speedy trial, and to report to the House what they shall think proper thereupon. Another course also uniformly adopted had been to take into custody the party accused. In the present case, where the party was not in custody, he apprehended their Lordships would be of opinion that to prevent any delay or failure of justice taking place, the Black Rod should be directed to take the party into custody. The Committee, according to precedent, should be a General Committee of the Peers who had attended Parliament during the present Session, five to be a quorum, and the Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas might be summoned to attend.

Committee accordingly appointed; and it was then

Ordered—"That the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod attending this House do take into his custody John Viscount Arbuthnott, and bring him to the Bar of this House."

THE DUCHY OF POSEN.

LORD KINNAIRD, pursuant to notice, asked whether the Government had received from their Minister at Berlin any communications relative to the late transactions in the duchy of Posen; and, if there were any such, whether there was any objection to lay them on the table of the House? His object was, to take the best means of disproving some grossly false statements which had appeared in the public press of this country, principally copied from the German newspapers—statements imputing acts of great cruelty to that unfortunate people, the Poles—statements which had misled not only the public generally in this country, but many of their friends, and among them a noble Baron (Lord Beaumont) who saw reason afterwards to retract the observations he had made. The papers for which he (Lord Kinnaird) intended to move would give such a contradiction to those statements, that it would appear that instead of it being possible to accuse those unfortunate Poles of cruelty, their conduct had been most praiseworthy under the circumstances. The House would remember that on the partition of Poland a part of the territory known as the duchy of Posen was made over to Prussia. He was not prepared to say that that country had not exercised its jurisdiction in a far more humane manner than another Power which obtained another part of that territory. The system had been adopted by the Prussian Government of inducing the German population to migrate and settle there, and some jealousy had consequently arisen between the Germans so settled and the Poles. Until the recent occasion, however, that jealousy did not exist; it was only lately, when it had been fomented by interested parties, that there had been opposition the one to the other. It would be in their Lordships' recollection that on the 13th of March a revolution broke out in Berlin, and by the 19th of that month the revolutionary party had expelled the troops, and obtained a triumph over the constituted authorities. These occurrences in Berlin naturally created considerable excitement in the duchy of Posen; and on the 20th of March, when news arrived that the revolutionary party had succeeded at Berlin, there was a general rising throughout the whole of Posen, and in the course of a week from 20,000 to 25,000 of the people were armed, some with scythes and others with better weapons. A committee of safety was formed, and a deputation from that committee was sent to Berlin, in order to obtain from the King of Prussia equal liberties with those which had been granted to his other subjects. At the same time, a deputation from the committee of German residents in Posen also arrived at Berlin; and the King of Prussia referring the matter to his Ministers, they granted all that was asked by these deputations. The deputations found, on their arrival at Berlin, that the Polish prisoners confined in that city since 1846 had been liberated, and that they, in conjunction with the Polish students, had been formed into a guard, to which was intrusted the duty of protecting a portion of the city of Berlin. He (Lord Kinnaird) mentioned this fact to show the cordiality which existed between the Poles and the Prussians. It must be borne in mind that the rising in Posen was not with a view of throwing off the yoke of the Prussian Government, but merely to obtain equal privileges with Prussian subjects. Up to that time the utmost cordiality prevailed between the Poles and the German residents in Posen. The conditions proposed by the deputations being acceded to, the deputations returned, and the people of Posen were perfectly satisfied. But during the interval, when the details were being carried out, the minority of Germans, to whom had been intrusted all the offices in Posen, feeling that by the proposed alterations they might be deprived of those offices, intrigued at Berlin to prevent the conditions which had been agreed to with the Polish deputations from being observed. There were at that time in the duchy of Posen about 45,000 Prussian troops, many of whom had been driven from Berlin—the number of these troops in the city of Posen alone being not less than 20,000. The officers commanding these troops, without the sanction of the Prussian Government, proclaimed martial law, and proceeded to scour the country, burning houses, and committing the greatest atrocities upon the unfortunate Poles. In consequence of these events, General Willisen was sent to Posen in order to ascertain what were the real facts of the case, and to endeavour to prevent further bloodshed. That officer found, upon his arrival, that the Prussians were on the point of attacking the Polish population; he was in time to prevent that attack; and after three days of the utmost anxiety he was enabled to get a convention signed with the Poles. This was one of the papers which he (Lord Kinnaird) was anxious to see laid on the table. Immediately after that convention was signed, the Poles, in accordance with its conditions, laid down their arms—a very small proportion of their number being allowed to retain arms; but after having conveyed their arms to the Prussian quarters, and while passing through one of the villages, a body of the unarmed Poles were fired upon by the German population and by the Jews. Now, statements had been circulated that the Poles had been guilty of the greatest cruelties towards the Jews in Posen, and that on several occasions a number of them had been massacred; but he could state to their Lordships, on information he had received, that only five Jews had been killed by the Poles. Calumnies of this kind had been repeatedly published against the Polish people; and he (Lord Kinnaird) thought, therefore, that if any proof could be afforded of the falsehood of such statements, their Lordships would be doing service to the cause of humanity, and an act of justice to the unfortunate Poles, by aiding in the production of that proof. The Prussian authorities had put forth statements that several Polish officers who were shot while mediating between the parties, were shot at the head of the insurgents. Inquiry had, however, been made on the subject, and the Prussian general had been obliged to admit that this statement was altogether erroneous, and that they had been erroneously and accidentally shot by the Germans. Under these circumstances, a large body of the Polish peasantry refused to lay down their arms, and in one of the encounters which took place, such was the enthusiasm of the peasantry, that, though they were only armed with scythes, they beat the regular troops. The most frightful atrocities were committed upon the unfortunate Polish prisoners. They were bound, and driven along like dogs; they were knocked down with the butt-ends of muskets—in preference to wasting powder upon them—and were then savagely butchered; they were subjected to every species of indignity and cruelty; and to such an extent was this carried that the Prussian authorities were obliged to reprimand in the strongest terms the excesses of the Prussian soldiers. The Judge-Advocate, in a proclamation he had issued, stated in the strongest terms that the cruelties of the Prussian soldiers were of the most horrible description. He (Lord Kinnaird) hoped the noble Marquess would consent to the production of a proclamation of General Willisen, to which he (Lord Kinnaird) referred in his notice, and in which that officer stated that the conduct of the Poles, in carrying out the convention, had been most meritorious. Such facts as these had been studiously suppressed in German papers, while everything that could tend to throw discredit on the Polish people had been greatly exaggerated. He had seen a letter from a lady who was the proprietress of a large domain in Posen, who stated that accusations had been made against the peasantry of committing great atrocities; that these statements were false; but that, on the other hand, the Prussian troops had committed the greatest excesses. The writer of that letter stated that her own house had been ransacked and the whole of her furniture destroyed by the troops; and that for writing on the subject to the German press, she had been exposed to the greatest insult and prosecution. He hoped that, if the papers to which his (Lord Kinnaird's) notice referred were not forthcoming, the noble Marquess would have no objection to obtain some further information on this subject from our Minister at Berlin; for, unfortunately, we had no agent or consul in the Polish provinces, from whom any information could be gained. He (Lord Kinnaird) might add, that at the time the revolution broke out in Posen, it had been suggested that subscriptions should be made by the friends of Poland in this country, to enable the Poles resident here to join their brethren in arms; but that measure was strongly objected to, and was at once abandoned. So determined and systematic had been the persecution of the Poles in Posen, that General Willisen had himself become the object of attack; but a deputation had waited upon that officer from a public meeting of the inhabitants of Berlin, expressing their shame and indignation at the treatment he had received from the German inhabitants of Posen; and the general in his reply bore favourable testimony to the conduct of the Poles. He (Lord Kinnaird) begged to ask the noble Marquess the question of which he had given notice, "Whether a copy of the convention, signed by the Prussian Royal Commissary, General Willisen, at Jarostaweie, with the Poles, on the 11th of April, and proclamations by the same general subequent to that period, had been communicated to the Government by Her Majesty's Minister at Berlin?"

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE was understood to state that the papers to which the noble Lord referred had been received by Her Majesty's Government; but he was not prepared to say that he could sanction their production. Those papers related to a transaction with which this country had no concern, in which it could take no part, and in which it ought to take no part. The Government had no means of contradicting or verifying the statements which had been transmitted from Berlin, and therefore no object would be answered by their production. He considered that it would be extremely inconvenient to have it supposed that the Government or Parliament of this country intended to take any part in the affairs to which the noble Lord had referred; for they were matters with which, in his opinion, neither the Government nor the Parliament had any right to interfere, unless they clearly affected the policy and interests of this country, and he, therefore, must beg to decline producing the papers to which the noble Lord had alluded.

The Earl of HARROWBY observed that he believed very gross misrepresentations had been made respecting the conduct of the Polish people. He agreed with the noble Marquess that it would not be right to produce these papers, although he could not admit that the state of a country whose constitution was regulated by treaties agreed to by England at the general settlement of Europe in 1815, could be a matter of indifference to us; but he was glad that this opportunity had been afforded him of expressing his disbelief of the representations which had been made with reference to the conduct of the Poles. If there had been atrocities committed by those people, they were in retaliation of atrocities committed by the nobles.

LORD BEAUMONT said, that, as he had been referred to by the noble Lord who had brought this subject under the notice of the House, he might be allowed to make a few observations. He felt some unwillingness to intrude himself on their attention, because he was aware of the indifference with which their Lordships regarded questions of foreign policy which did not immediately and directly affect the interests of this country. He must say that he did not blame their Lordships for that indifference, for he believed it was perfectly right that neither their Lordships nor this country should take any particular notice of events in other countries which were purely of an internal nature. If he (Lord Beaumont) could regard this subject as one of purely internal administration, he would readily admit that the noble Marquess was quite right in the reasons he had assigned for declining to lay on the table the papers referred to by the noble Lord. But he (Lord Beaumont) considered that any man must be profoundly ignorant of the state of Europe, and of the position of the eastern portion of Christendom, who imagined that what was now passing among the population of Poland, and the tribes located in that portion of the Continent, would not eventually affect the interests of this country, and might not possibly involve us in a European war. He was afraid that their Lordships' silence in reference to Continental affairs had already, in more than one instance, done injury. For example, if their Lordships had come to some resolution with respect to the rights of Denmark, in reference to the lawless invasion of that country which had taken place, it would not now be the case that a destructive and dangerous war was left to be put an end to by mediation only now commencing. He knew not whether they were not at the present moment exposed to danger in the Baltic in consequence of their silence; and for this reason he thought his noble Friend was perfectly justified in asking for the papers. Had the recent attempts in Poland been successful, the nucleus of a new kingdom would have been formed in Europe, and it would therefore be impossible to suppose their Lordships could be indifferent to a circumstance producing so great a change in the balance of power on the Continent. He differed from the noble Marquess, who thought that this was not a matter affecting England; for he (Lord Beaumont) conceived that anything likely to effect a change in the balance of power, and the relative importance of nations, concerned this country. But his object in rising was to explain how it was that elsewhere he had made certain observations to which his noble Friend had alluded. At the time he made those observations he was under the impression that the Polish portion of the population of Posen had not only committed errors, but crimes; but since that time he had received so many communications, both personal and written, from indviduals in Germany, or who had been there and witnessed what had occurred, that he had altered that opinion, and, relying on the information afforded him from so many quarters, he was convinced that the unfortunate events which followed as soon as the Poles imagined the convention entered into with General Willisen would not be fulfilled, did not justify their being stigmatised by the use of the phrases which had been used towards them, and which he also had been induced to apply to their conduct, and he was happy to have the opportunity of retracting, as he now did, those phrases. While he acquitted them of having committed crime, he would not exempt them from the charge of having fallen into very grievous errors; and he believed the Committee of Public Safety in particular, had not acted with tact or judgment. At the same time the convention should have been carried into effect, and many of the evils that subsequently arose would have been avoided.

The EARL of ELLENBOROUGH believed the rule of the House was to permit a question to be asked only for the purpose of preventing the necessity of a Motion, it being assumed that the answer would render any Motion unnecessary. The only inconvenience of making a Motion was, that it entailed long speeches; but if the House were to be obliged to hear long speeches, it would be infinitely better that a Motion were made. Nothing could be more inconvenient than to touch upon circumstances connected with the existing convulsion in Europe in the present irregular and incidental manner, for the consequence was, that those who entertained matured opinions on this important subject were unwilling to produce them to their Lordships, because there was no question before the House. Thus a false impression was produced of the opinion of the House, as silence appeared like an acquiescence in the observations made. He never knew the indulgence of the House more abused than on the present occasion.

LORD BEAUMONT had thought that the noble Lord possessed a good memory; but he found himself deceived, or surely the noble Lord would have been aware that nothing had been done to-night further than to imitate the example of the noble Lord opposite (Lord Stanley) on the Spanish question.

Subject at an end.

IRELAND.

EARL FITZWILLIAM rose, pursuant to notice, to bring under the notice of the House the present condition of Ireland, and to move the following Resolutions and an Address to Her Majesty:—

"1. That it is incumbent upon this House to express the Approbation with which it has viewed the Wisdom, Energy, and Prudence with which the Executive Government of Ireland has been conducted during the recent Period of Difficulty.

"2. That it is equally the Duty of this House to express the deep Sorrow with which it continues to view the prolonged Distresses of many Classes of the Irish People, and the Regret which it feels that the Measures passed in the concluding Session of the late Parliament for the Improvement of Ireland have not hitherto been productive of the Benefits which were anticipated from their Enactment.

"3. To express the decided Opinion of this House, that further Legislative Measures are required for Remedy of the Evils under which Ireland labours for the Development of its natural Resources, and for the Improvement of its Agriculture and Commerce."

The state of that kingdom was a far more interesting subject to their Lordships and to the Parliament of this country than that subject which had just now occupied them. It was now seven months since Parliament met, and what had been done in that period? Was the condition of Ireland at that moment such as to be satisfactory to their Lordships? He would not say, that the Legislature had not done everything in their power; but no one could deny that Ireland was in a state to excite and justify alarm. At the meeting of Parliament their Lordships were invited by his noble Friends below him (the Marquess of Lansdowne and Earl Grey) to legislate for the purpose of suppressing the state of crime which had become so formidable in that country; and without a moment's hesitation that House had assented to that demand, and, without the slightest hesitation or delay beyond that which the forms of the House rendered necessary, armed Government with the powers for which they sought. If he were to judge of the feelings of their Lordships by his own, he was quite sure that they would have been glad to have placed in the hands of his noble Friends even greater powers than they had asked for. They, exercising, as it since appeared, a sound discretion, made no such trespass on the liberality of the House, but were content with asking what they considered sufficient; and in doing so, he made no erroneous estimate of the necessary means of carrying out their views. The law with which their Lordships armed the Government on that occasion had been eminently successful, and had been exercised with the soundest discretion by his noble Friend at the head of the Irish Government (the Earl of Clarendon). To the Executive Government of Ireland, next to the Legislature of the empire, Ireland was indebted for her present tranquillity. It would ill become their Lordships if, with the knowledge of scenes which had taken place in other countries, they regarded the great probability that such occurrences would have happened in Ireland but for the ability of the Government there, they were to allow the Session to expire without expressing their opinion as to the manner in which the Executive Government of Ireland had conducted the administration of that country. That Government had had a great and difficult task, but had nevertheless performed it with perfect success; and it was a remarkable fact, that it appeared to be the first Government for many years that had possessed the rare faculty of enlisting the feelings of the people to an extent which had no parallel in their exertions to promote the ends of justice, and that fact was proved by the facility with which convictions of criminals had been obtained all over the country, and by the absence of difficulty in procuring the attendance of witnesses. The result of this had been the successful execution of the law; and considering the condition of Ireland, and what it might have been, he thought it the duty of the House not to allow the Session to pass by without expressing the opinion which they all must entertain of the conduct of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and of those who acted under him. But what had been done in Parliament? Were their Lordships of opinion that the condition of Ireland was such as to render any further legislative measures unnecessary? Was nothing to be done for the benefit of the various classes of the people in that country? It was not enough for the Legislature to stop short with achieving the prosperity of any one class—it must seek the benefit of all. Were they satisfied with the legislation of past years, or were they content with the measures brought forward in the last Session? A very small portion indeed of those Bills had yet received the Royal Assent. The scheme for cultivating waste lands in Ireland by the Government, and the scheme for facilitating the sale of encumbered estates, had not succeeded; at least, they were not passed yet. Of all the measures proposed by Government they had adopted none but the poor-law, and the million-and-a-half Bill to assist landlords to improve their estates. This sum, if distributed over the acreage of Ireland, would give about 1*s.* 6*d.* an acre—no very great amount for such a purpose. The Commissioners had sanctioned the applications for about 1,400,000*l.*, or very nearly the whole amount of the proposed loan; but he should very much like to know how much money had actually been advanced to the landlords of Ireland. It was not by an entry in a ledger that land could be cultivated, or labourers rescued from the workhouse. Money, to be of any use, must be paid away, and laid out in wages of 10*d.*, or 1*s.* 6*d.*, or 2*s.* a day. Then, indeed, some good would be done for the people of Ireland, and the million and a half would go into the pockets, cabins, and interior man of the Irish labourer. But of the grant itself, it appeared from the last returns that the sums actually advanced amounted not to 1,400,000*l.*, or half a million, but to 220,000. The whole amount was sanctioned by the House—1,400,000—applied for and sanctioned by the Commissioners; but only that small portion of it had yet assumed the shape in which alone it could be beneficial to the country. No greater sum than this 220,000*l.* had been advanced to the landed proprietors, to enable them to improve 19,000,000 acres, and to enable them to rescue the labourer from the workhouse; and yet in the face of such facts as these, they were incessantly told of the large sums which were given for the benefit of the people of Ireland, and for the advancement of agriculture. Their Lordships were well aware that for some years past the root on which the people of Ireland principally subsisted had in a great degree failed; and, though there were some who thought it might be almost desirable that potatoes should never again be cultivated in Ireland, yet still the recent and present loss which the failure of that root had occasioned must long be deeply felt; and though great temporary efforts were made to make good the want which thence arose, he must nevertheless be permitted to ask, what had been done for the permanent maintenance of the six millions of human beings who inhabited Ireland? He certainly might be told that a poor-law had been passed. Upon that subject he had but a few words to offer. He had the misfortune to be an Irish proprietor; and, though what Irish proprietors said might be listened to civilly in that House, yet, generally speaking, everything that Irish proprietors said with regard to their country, their own tenantry, or their own estates, was listened to there and elsewhere in a very unfavourable spirit. Facts, however, which had been so proved as to admit of no controversy, must be their only resource. He did not complain of the poor-law, though there were electoral divisions in Ireland where the poor-rate was not 2*s.*, 3*s.*, but 7*s.* in the pound. There was one division in which they were told of the rate being larger than the amount the proprietor received in rent for the land; and he had no doubt there were persons—and he was certain there was one individual in the House—who knew of the fact to which he alluded. In calling their Lordships' attention to this part of the subject, he ventured to hope it would not be supposed that he was influenced by any considerations of private interest; on the contrary, he felt the pressure of poors-rates as little as perhaps any proprietor throughout the whole of Ireland. On portions of his property, the rate did not exceed 2½*d.* in the pound; on other parts of his land, it was 1*s.*; on others, 1*s.* 6*d.*; and at the utmost, 2*s.* That was the utmost to which the poor-rate went on his property, and he certainly did not complain of the operation of the poor-law in his own case. But the state of things in Galway and Kerry unfortunately happened to be widely different from what they were in the county of Wicklow. In complaining, therefore, of the poor-law, he trusted it would be felt that he was not actuated by any selfish considerations. Uninfluenced by any but public grounds, he thought it right to call the attention of the House to the fact, that in various parts of Ireland the sums charged on account of poor-rates amounted to *5s.*, and often to *7s.* in the pound. That that state of things must be attended with the most serious consequences was a truth which he presumed that no noble Lord in that House would be disposed to contradict; therefore did he feel it his duty to invite the serious attention of Parliament to the present condition of Ireland. He would ask them, did they intend that such a state of things should be allowed to continue—did they propose to make the land valueless—did they propose to destroy an entire class of men—did they contemplate the uprooting and destruction of those whom he should call the landed aristocracy of Ireland? He was quite sure that no man for a moment imagined that their Lordships intended anything of the sort. But he thought it his duty to assure them that there were many parts of Ireland in which the landed aristocracy would be utterly destroyed unless the policy now pursued towards that country underwent a fundamental change. He should not say that he had examined all the blue books that had been printed on this subject; but this he would say, that he had examined a very considerable proportion of them, and he did not hesitate to assert that their contents fully proved the necessity for an extensive change in the principles upon which they had been accustomed hitherto to legislate for Ireland. He would repeat, that under the present system the landed proprietary of Ireland must be ruined. He did not say that would be the case in Leinster or along the eastern coast, but all beyond the Shannon must be destroyed; the whole of Connaught, to which he might add, Donegal; and as to Munster, it must share the same fate, with scarcely an exception. He believed that his noble Friend the President of the Council would not escape from the same predicament, as far as his estates in Kerry were concerned, inasmuch as it was stated his poor-rates were as much as his rental. When the landed aristocracy of Ireland ceased to exist, what, he would ask, would stand between the Government of this country on the one hand, and the democracy of Ireland on the other? He ought not, perhaps, to call it a democracy, but rather a mob; and by whom was that mob wielded? When he asked those questions, he at the same time guessed what their answer would be from their silent acquiescence, that they understood and concurred in his sentiments. He implored the House to lose no time in seriously considering the subject with which the present conjuncture of affairs called on them to deal. In order to tranquillise Ireland they had made the property of Ireland provide for the poverty of Ireland; and if that which had been property continued to remain property all might be very well. This, however, he would tell them, that if they intended to place the burden of supporting the poverty of Ireland upon the property of Ireland, there was another burden which he must ask their Lordships to take off the shoulders of Ireland: he must ask them to do so for the sake of the peace andprosperity of Ireland — he must ask them to do so for the sake of the security of Ireland—he must ask them to do so for the sake of the empire at large—he must ask them to do so to put a stop to one of the sources of dangerous agitation—he must ask them to take off from the shoulders of the people the burden of supporting the Roman Catholic Church, by establishing that Church, and paying it from the resources of the State. That was what ultimately must be done. They must make no difference between the Roman Catholic priest and the Protestant clergyman. They must not enable the one to point to the other as an inferior or degraded person. The pastors of the two persuasions must, in familiar phrase, eat out of the same platter, and drink out of the same horse-pond. Now, he had to ask what was it they had done in the course of the Session for Ireland? There was an Encumbered Estates Bill still before their Lordships. A Bill of the same nature had been introduced last year, but it had failed—and why? Because, as he contended, the interest of Ireland had been sacrificed to the demands of England. Were such a Bill, however, to be carried, its beneficial effects would be slow of operation. He knew that the contrary opinion was very prevalent. They heard that English capital would flow into Ireland; now this was true in one sense; but if it were meant by the assertion that English capitalists would purchase Irish estates, and become the proprietary body of the country, why then he did not feel that any very great advantages would result from the change. He would rather see Ireland go on under the existing proprietary than see the old race of landlords displaced by English capitalists. But it would be said by England, "What can we do? We passed a poor-law—what more can we effect?" But under that poor-law were the people properly taken care of? Was their condition improved—was pauperism diminishing? Why, in the union of Ballinrobe alone, out of a population of 85,000, no less than 30,000 persons were in the receipt of outdoor relief, at an expense of 700*l.* a week, or 35,000*l.* a year. Now such a state of matters could not go on. Such a state of matters rendered it imperative upon Government to interfere. It was necessary that the people of England should be aware of what they did not yet seem to understand, which was, that at the present moment distress was actually increasing in Ireland. He repeated, it was not diminishing, it was increasing; and the people of England would find, year after year, that whatever might be the state of the unions at Christmas, it was in the early spring that the pressure on the rates, and the pressure ultimately on England, would regularly increase as the season advanced. A poor-law might be—nay, undoubtedly was—applicable to this country, where competence was the rule, and destitution the exception; but it was not, and could not be, applicable to a country where destitution was the rule, and competence the exception. A poor-rate had, in fact, been levied as a substitute for the potatoes; but so far from the expectation being fulfilled which had been entertained, that the famine would have the good effect of introducing a better species of food into Ireland, they would find that, if the next crop of potatoes should prove but an average good one, the Irish peasantry would again fall back upon them as their ordinary means of subsistence, and the Legislature would have lost the opportunity they possessed of working a great change in the habits, and introducing a great change in the food, of the people. But they heard it stated, and indeed it was hinted in documents emanating from the Government, that no further measures of relief were in contemplation. No doubt he would be told of the Landlord and Tenant Bill in the other House. But was that a measure of Government? No, it had been introduced by a private Member, and it had been referred to a Select Committee upstairs. This was the only remedial measure originated by the other House after seven months of legislation. But, after all, what would be its effects? It would only tend to interfere with matters which were much better left to the private arrangements between landlord and tenant. Rules and habits grew out of long-continued practice which they would vainly endeavour to eradicate by means of legislation. Then, with respect to great national works, he remembered that in the last Session of Parliament his noble Friend opposite, who, he supposed, might now be considered to be the leader of the Opposition, had expressed an opinion in which he (Earl Fitzwilliam) fully concurred. He had stated that much might be done for Ireland by the encouragement of railway enterprise. But, unaided by the State, railway enterprise would do little for or in Ireland; and when he said so of railroads, he meant the observation to apply to all kinds of great public works. If such works were to be executed in Ireland, it was by the Government alone that they could and must be executed. They must not judge of Ireland by what took place in England. They must not keep going on, with respect to the sister country, the old beaten track which they pursued here: because great public works were constructed in England by private enterprise and capital, it must not be inferred that the same thing could be done in Ireland. There was no capital in Ireland for the purpose, and English capitalists would not send their capital to Ireland. The present sovereigns of the railway community here would not send their capital for investment in Ireland, so long as there was a single nook of English ground into which they could push their speculations. England, indeed, was the only country in Europe in which great public undertakings had been effected without the aid of Government. He did not mean to say that there might not be here and there some exceptions to the rule; but the rule was certainly what he had stated it to be. In England, on the contrary, even in these times of difficulty, there was more capital afloat than its possessors knew what to do with. But in Ireland, if they wanted to improve the condition of the country—if they wished to make it, so to speak, a better machine for the production of capital—it was by the Government, and the Government alone, that the necessary public works must be undertaken and executed. Not that he meant to say that it was necessary that the whole of the capital should be advanced by the State; but this he did mean to say, that either by an allowance of money, or what he might call an advance of credit, England must bring about the completion of Irish public works. And when he said this, he would always wish their Lordships to keep it in mind, that in no part of the United Kingdom were works of great public utility more needed, or indeed so much, as they were in Ireland. He wanted to know what they were going to do with the unemployed masses of the Irish people? Were the Government going to employ them? He considered that it was the duty of the Government to do so. They should make a judicious selection of what works were to be executed, and then they should commence to employ the people upon them. He often heard the question asked, what would they do with the people when the works were finished? Now, he did not think that this question argued much thought or foresight. For any person, who for a moment reflected, could not help seeing that these works would lead to the enterprise of others. Let them assume that the Dublin and Galway Railway was constructed, would not warehouses, and storehouses, and works of every description, spring up along the line, affording the means of very extensive employment? He was in favour of a system of enrolment of these labourers. They would have to maintain a militia for the defence of the country if it was involved in war; why should they not maintain a similar body in time of peace to prevent a greater danger, that of famine? He would have a certain quantity of this enrolled band emigrate every year; they could be usefully employed in the colonies. And while he was upon this subject, he would say that he was in favour of a very large system of emigration. Emigration on a small scale would do no good: it might relieve the estates of individuals who had the means of carrying it on, but it would be of no use to the poorer proprietors. He could assure the Government that the country could not go on as it was at present circumstanced. The gentry of Ireland had exerted themselves in the late crisis with unexampled energy. He challenged any nation to show instances of greater devotion, greater self-denial, and greater zeal than had been evinced by the Irish gentry. But he did not stand there to defend that body: he only desired to say that the Imperial Government of Britain could not govern Ireland without the aid of that gentry. If the Government destroyed the landed proprietary of Ireland, it would not be for the good of the middle classes, neither would it be for the good of the lower; and he could assure them, that if they destroyed the Irish gentry as a class, the destruction of the English gentry would very soon follow. With this fact impressed upon his mind, he asked whether the Government were willing to persevere in a system which destroyed one class without ministering to the comfort or happiness of the other. He was anxious that the English people should not imagine, because they had passed a poor-law, that therefore they had assuaged the miseries of the lower clases in Ireland. He knew that that was a very general impression in England. But he would tell them that they had done no such thing. The people had suffered more since the passing of the poor-law than they had ever done before, because the sources of charity in that country had become diminished. Every person acquainted with the people of Ireland was aware that the feelings which the peasantry entertained towards one and the other were quite incomprehensible to the same classes of people in England. The disposition of the Irish peasant had ever been that of sharing his very last potato with a stranger in distress. Under the baneful influence of this law, that beautiful feeling of charity was dying away. Such a calamity was foretold, and that which had been foretold had now become history. The people of England were a curious people. They possessed the feeling more than any other nation in the world, that anything which was theirs was good, and they were perhaps very much in the right. But they did not seem to have a notion that what was good for them might be very ill for others. Acting under this principle, they enacted a poor-law for Ireland, contrary to the wishes of every class in that country. The very class they intended to benefit by it were averse to it; yet nothing daunted by the opposition, they persevered in the measure. He wished to know whether the Government considered what they had already done was sufficient, and, trusting that the question would not be answered in the affirmative, he would conclude by reading the resolution.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE said, that he felt himself placed in a difficult position by one part of the Motion of the noble Earl, namely, that which referred in terms of merited approbation to the important services which had been rendered to his greater proportion of the outrages which had disgraced Ireland within the last year and a half were attributable to the agitation for fixity of tenure. One of the great grievances of Ireland was the system of intimidation which prevailed in that country. The landlord and the farmer were in the same position. Let them be ever so desirous of improving their property, the moment they set about it they were met by agrarian foes, and these legislators made very short work of any one who infringed their code. This intimidation equally affected the labourers, the shopkeepers, and the merchants. Unless a shopkeeper in a country town in Ireland subscribed to the funds for promoting agitation, he was immediately tabooed, and the result was probably his ruin. He (the Earl of Glengall) considered that some steps should be taken to put an end to this system. The late Earl Grey had succeeded in putting down agitation in Ireland for two years; but he (the Earl of Glengall) believed that unless it was repressed for five or six years, they could not expect to see that country in a peaceful, and tranquil, and satisfactory state. Lord Wellesley had said that crime could not be disconnected from agitation; and he (the Earl of Glengall) believed that that statement was perfectly true, for to the system of intimidation to which he had alluded he attributed the great majority of crimes committed in Ireland. The greatest difficulty was experienced in that country in obtaining evidence against criminals; for the witnesses were aware that they must submit to expatriation, or remain in the country at the risk of being murdered. Coercion Bills and special commissions had been tried in vain as a remedy for this state of things; and he thought it was much to be regretted that no Government had had the courage to step in and adopt vigorous measures for putting down the treasonable associations to which he had alluded. In many cases, he regretted to say, the agitation was promoted by the Roman Catholic priests. He was aware that there were many excellent men among that body; but there were many others who did not scruple to lend themselves to this system of agitation and intimidation. The fact was, that if they declined to join this agitation their congregations refused to support them, and they might be reduced to complete destitution. He was acquainted with the case of a priest who had lately been mentioned very frequently in the papers, and who was formerly strongly opposed to agitation, but the consequence of this opposition was his almost total ruin; and he (the Earl of Glengall) believed that the state of wretchedness and misery to which that individual had been reduced, had alone driven him to become a violent agitator. In one of the last debates at Conciliation Hall, one of these agitators ordered all the persons to arm; and it appeared that these instructions were not disregarded, for in towns of 15,000 or 16,000 inhabitants, arms to the extent of 100 or 200 stand a week were disposed of. The direction now was to organise the country, and the consequence was that agitators were organising seditious clubs in all the towns and villages. They boasted of their success, and he had no doubt with cause, for the people were told that after the harvest they would obtain all they wanted; that was to say, the plunder of landed property. If this agitation were allowed to go on, their Lordships might rely on it that the same spirit would reach England. Under these circumstances he thought it almost useless to enter into the consideration of remedial measures, because until they gave security to life and property, and established the fact to whom Ireland belonged, they did nothing. They might enact as many laws as they pleased for the improvement of the country, but they would be neutralised by these treasonable clubs, and this organisation which was now going on. He believed that there was a great deal more capital in Ireland than many people seemed to be aware of. A vast number of persons had their 5,000*l.* or 3,000*l.*, but in consequence of the agitation that existed they were afraid to lay out their capital, except in the funds; and it never would be expended in agriculture, or for the improvement of the country, so long as the baneful system of agitation was allowed to prevail. Large sums, also, were lodged in the savings-banks, and when there was a run on the savings-bank of Killarney the greatest commotion was excited where their Lordships would the least expect it, namely, in the workhouses, from which the paupers rushed out to the savings-bank with the proofs of their deposits in their hands. As the poor-law had been alluded to, he must say that he feared that law had the tendency, to a great extent, of raising up everybody against the pauper, and this was the reason why those dreadful scenes, which were alluded to the other night, were enacted. All this was foretold at the time of the passing of the law, and the only answer given was, that there was a clause for emigration, in respect to which a great deal was intended to be done. Now, he thought that there was but one instance, in all the unions in Ireland, of that clause being enforced. He believed that nothing would be so advantageous to Ireland as encouraging the railway system, and the success of the lines already established had been very great. This would be one of the main means of improving the country; and it was to be hoped that something would also be done in aid of the fisheries, by which 200,000 or 300,000 people could be profitably employed. But it was, above all, necessary to put down treason. No one could tell how soon they might have war, and then it would be difficult to put down these treasonable associations, desirous of coalescing with foreign countries, if they were allowed to get ahead. Now was the time, while the country was at peace, to put them down, and after that they might pass remedial measures, and then Ireland, instead of being a dead weight about the neck of England, would become a tower of strength to this country.

The previous question then put, whether the said question shall be now put?

Resolved in the *Negative*.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, June 23, 1848.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—1° Court of Justiciary (Scotland).

2° Sunday Trading (Metropolis).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Dr. Bowring, Mr. Grantley Berkeley, and several other Hon. Members, from an Immense Number of Places, in favour of an Extension of the Elective Franchise.—By Mr. Ward, from Henry Wolstenholme, Inhabitant of Sheffield, for an Alteration of the Law respecting the Currency.—By Mr. W. Evans, from Members of the Congregation of Wesleyan Methodists of the Town of Bakewell, and its Vicinity (Derby), for a Better Observance of the Lord's Day.—By Mr. Smollett, from the Commissioners of Supply of Dumbarton, against the Places of Worship Sites (Scotland) Bill.—By Sir W. Molesworth, from Merchants, Bankers, Shipowners, and Others, of the City of London, respecting the Disposal of Waste Lands in the Colonies.—By Mr. Philip Miles, from the Parish of Clarendon (Middlesex), to take the Case of the West India Colonies into Consideration.—By Lord Dudley Stuart, from Charles Reynolds Williams, of Park Square West, Regent's Park, for Inquiry into the Case of Crishna Rao Withul.—By Mr. Alexander Hastie, from Distillers of Spirits from Malt only, in Glasgow and its Neighbourhood, against a Reduction of the Differential Rate of Duty between Colonial and Home-made Spirits.—By Mr. Beckett, from Leeds, against Interference with the Use of Sugar in Brewing.—By Sir Edward Buxton, from Members of the Brook Street West India Association, in favour of an Adequate Sugar Protection.—By Mr. Ward, from Samuel Roberts, of Park Grange, Yorkshire, for Appointing a Senate to Assist the Crown in its Functions.—By Viscount Duncan, from William Graham Watt, of Brecknoss, in the County of Orkney, for Inquiry respecting the Crown Lands of that Place.—By Colonel Conolly, from the Parish of Finner-in-Innismacsaint, in the Diocese of Clogher, against the Diplomatic Relations, Court of Rome, Bill.—By Lord Dudley Stuart, from Operatives suffering Hunger and Distress for Want of Employ, residing in the Parish of St. Marylebone, for Remedial Measures for their Distress.—By Mr. Newdegate, from C. F. Mathews, and several other Persons, for Restricting the Number of Foreign Theatres in the Metropolis.—By Viscount Castlereagh, from Inhabitants of the Manor of Ballywalter and its Liberties, in the County of Down, for Alteration of the Imprisonment for Debt (Ireland) Bill.—By Mr. George Hamilton, from Richard Dean Kane, of Talbot Street, Dublin, for Amendment of the Lands' Clauses Consolidation Act (1845).—By Mr. Forbes, from Members of the Parochial Board of Falkirk, against the Lunatic Asylums (Scotland) Bill.—By Mr. William Miles, from Guardians of the Poor of the Clutton Union, Somerset, for an Alteration of the Law respecting Mendicancy.—By Mr. Monsell, from Proprietors, Tenants, and Others, of the County of Limerick, respecting the Municipal Corporations (Ireland) Acts.—By Mr. Herries, from Members of the Committee of the General Shipowners' Society, and by other Hon. Members, from several Places, against a Repeal of the Navigation Laws.—By Sir Benjamin Hall, from Guardians of the Poor of the Parish of St. Marylebone, for an Alteration of the Poor Law.—By Viscount Jocelyn, from King's Lynn, and its Vicinity, for an Alteration of the Law respecting Promiscuous Intercourse.—By Lord Dudley Stuart, from Charles De Lacy Nash, of Montagu Street, Portman Square, respecting the Prosecution of several Railway Depredators.

ALLEGED ABUSES UNDER THE LAND IMPROVEMENT ACT.

On the Motion that the House at its rising do adjourn till Monday next,

SIR B. HALL referred to a notice which he had given the other evening, and said, that in pursuance of that notice he wished to put a question to his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the subject. On the 10th of June, 1847, an Act of Parliament was passed, by which 500,000*l.* was authorised to be advanced to proprietors of land in Ireland, subject to certain regulations. He desired to call the attention of his right hon. Friend to two instances of misappropriation of this fund. The first case was that of Mr. O'Neil, who was described as of Dunowen Castle, in the county of Galway, and who, it appeared, had asked for an advance of money, which was assented to by the Treasury. An instalment of 500*l.* was subsequently issued on his representation that the people on his estate were in a very distressed condition, and that he could not employ them without assistance from the Government. On the 14th of December last, exactly six weeks after Mr. O'Neil had received this money, he wrote a letter to the Board, saying that it was impossible to commence his works until the spring; and the Board gave him till the spring accordingly. When the spring, however, arrived, they found that greater proportion of the outrages which had disgraced Ireland within the last year and a half were attributable to the agitation for fixity of tenure. One of the great grievances of Ireland was the system of intimidation which prevailed in that country. The landlord and the farmer were in the same position. Let them be ever so desirous of improving their property, the moment they set about it they were met by agrarian foes, and these legislators made very short work of any one who infringed their code. This intimidation equally affected the labourers, the shopkeepers, and the merchants. 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ALLEGED ABUSES UNDER THE LAND IMPROVEMENT ACT.

On the Motion that the House at its rising do adjourn till Monday next,

Sir B. HALL referred to a notice which he had given the other evening, and said, that in pursuance of that notice he wished to put a question to his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the subject. On the 10th of June, 1847, an Act of Parliament was passed, by which 500,000*l.* was authorised to be advanced to proprietors of land in Ireland, subject to certain regulations. He desired to call the attention of his right hon. Friend to two instances of misappropriation of this fund. The first case was that of Mr. O'Neil, who was described as of Dunowen Castle, in the county of Galway, and who, it appeared, had asked for an advance of money, which was assented to by the Treasury. An instalment of 500*l.* was subsequently issued on his representation that the people on his estate were in a very distressed condition, and that he could not employ them without assistance from the Government. On the 14th of December last, exactly six weeks after Mr. O'Neil had received this money, he wrote a letter to the Board, saying that it was impossible to commence his works until the spring; and the Board gave him till the spring accordingly. When the spring, however, arrived, they found that no improvements were made on Mr. O'Neil's property, and they discovered that he had misappropriated the money, and taken up a bill of his which had been overdue. The Board then wrote to Mr. O'Neil, and insisted on some improvements being made on account of this money, whereupon this gentleman, with modest assurance, asked for a second instalment of 500*l*. To this the Board objected, and a prosecution was threatened. What he wished to know was, whether any legal proceedings had been taken against this gentleman, and whether or not the works had been commenced? According to the Act, all labour was to be paid in the current coin of the realm; but with respect to Lord de Freyne, and the other gentlemen, whose names he would not mention, and whose cases he would not enter upon, as there were mitigatory circumstances connected with them, this part of the Act had not been complied with. The 29th Clause, enforcing this provision, was introduced by the Duke of Wellington. The noble Duke, in giving notice of his intention to move this clause, observed that it appeared to him they could not apply any effectual remedy for the evils of Ireland unless they enforced the necessity of paying the wages of labour in the current coin of the realm; he accordingly introduced a clause to that effect, and it was carried. Such was the state of the law, and now he would proceed to show how it had been violated by Lord de Freyne. That noble Lord received 3,000*l*. under the Act by six instalments of 500*l*. each; but instead of acting up to the spirit and intention of the Act, he paid to the labourers employed by this means 10 per cent in meal and goods, while 90 per cent was paid by checks on his agents, which checks were not cashed by those agents, but carried by them to the rent account of the noble Lord. The effect of this was to produce great wretchedness among the labourers, who had no money with which to procure necessaries. He had shown, he thought, enough to satisfy the House that the Act, so far as regarded payment in the current coin of the realm, had not been complied with; and he should be glad to hear from the Chancellor of the Exchequer what course had been taken in consequence of those proceedings. The noble Lord got his land improved by means of money procured from the public Treasury, and at the same time he got very good credit on his rent account.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER regretted that he was not able to answer the whole of the question which had been put by his hon. Friend. It was necessary to make a reference to Ireland with respect to at least one of the cases, but for that there had not been sufficient time. The first case mentioned by the hon. Baronet—that of Mr. O'Neil—he believed had been very correctly stated. With regard to the application for a second instalment, to which reference had been made, he had distinctly to observe, that in no case was a second instalment granted till it was ascertained by an inspector, sent for the purpose, that the first instalment had been laid out in the terms of the Act. So soon as it was found that the money in this case had been misapplied, a second instalment was refused, and legal proceedings for the recovery of the money were raised against O'Neil. On receiving this intimation, O'Neil offered to commence the works and to provide the money for that purpose; and the great object of the Board of Works being to secure employment for the people, and not to expend money in legal proceedings, they had not persevered in those proceedings. The hon. Baronet had asked whether or not the works had been commenced; but to that question he was unable to give an answer. He would make inquiry, however, into all the circumstances. With regard to the next case, that of Lord De Freyne, and what took place between him and his *employés*, the hon. Gentleman the Member for Roscommon would be able to give full information; but he was prepared to state that as soon as the circumstances complained of were brought to the knowledge of the Board, a communication was made to the noble Lord on the subject, and he was informed that the mode of paying the wages of his labourers was not in accordance with the Act. The Board had in this case, as in other cases, done their best to carry out the provisions of the measure, and they refused to pay any new instalments wherever it was shown that those given had not been applied strictly in the terms laid down by the law.

MR. FRENCH: If any departure from the provisions of the Act, which he very much doubted, had taken place at all, it had occurred without the knowledge and without the sanction of Lord de Freyne. The moment he learned it was alleged that the provisions of the 29th Section had not been complied with, directions were sent to the contractors that the orders of the Board of Works, no matter what they might be, must be strictly adhered to. The application was originally made under the 9th and 10th Vict., c. 101, in which no provision, such as that of the 29th Section, was. Under the impression that this application would be, as it should have been, immediately attended to, arrangements were made with the present contractors, Messrs. Kelly and D'Arcy, to carry on the proposed improvements; but, in consequence of objections on the part of the Commissioners to sanction works exclusively in moor or bog lands, it was deemed advisable that a new application should be made under the present Act. The printed form for this purpose was sent to the noble Lord, and signed by him, which was the only step he took in the matter, and the whole arrangements were left to be carried into effect by the contractors. The works now undertaken were carried on with great spirit. About 1,100 persons were daily employed. Lord de Freyne was resident in the country, and had every reason to believe that the arrangements were satisfactory to all parties. The first intimation he received in London to the contrary was a letter from Mr. Walker, dated the 25th of March, who stated that the provisions of the 29th Clause had not been complied with. This letter, which reached him in London, was immediately sent over to Mr. Kelly, and an explanation of the circumstances required; an answer was received from him, in which he contradicted every statement made by the Board of Works, as to the course pursued by the contractors, and forwarded an address, signed by every one of the labourers employed on the works, expressing their satisfaction with all the arrangements that had been made for them. Mr. Kelly, moreover, gave an account of the moneys received from the Board of Works, and the money paid out. So far from the Board of Works being in advance, the result was that the contractors on the works were spending in advance some 800*l.* or 900*l.*, instead of spending, as had been said, the public money. Mr. Kelly's letter was as follows:—

"MR. H. KELLY TO MR. FRENCH.

"4th April, 1848.

"I beg to say, in reply to your letter which I received this day on my return from Ewett, that the statements contained in the letter from the Board are not right. The plan adopted in Lord de Freyne's drainage carried the law into effect, and was as follows:—

"The district, as you are aware, in which the drainage has been undertaken, is a very extensive one, comprising the greater part of the barony of Frenchpark. It was divided into two portions. The Artagh or south division, with the demesne, was given to me; the northern division, lying between Loughlynn and Frenchpark, to Mr. John D'Arcy. Immediately on our appointment we established an office in the town of Frenchpark, under the management of Mr. Thomas Dillon, a young man of considerable ability, and who has had a great deal of experience under the Board of Works in keeping accounts. Accordingly as the taskwork was executed it was surveyed by Mr. John Higgins, inspected by us, and if we approved we certified to Mr. Dillon the name of the person by whom it was done, and the amount earned. Mr. Dillon filled up a printed cheque for the sum so earned, to be paid by Mr. Joseph Gishin, which cheque was handed to the person. Some few of the people took the amount in money; the greater majority paid them into Lord de Freyne's office in rent. The persons so paying them had at their own request been permitted by his Lordships' agent, Mr. Carr, to defer payment of rent, and to convert their corn into meal, for the support of their families, and agreed, in the idle seasons before Christmas, and after May, to go to work, and pay their rents as they earned, which, as far as they went, Mr. Carr can state they honestly did so. Any tenant who had not sufficient corn to support his family, got from Mr. James Mager's mill meal, which he was at once paid for, and which the tenant settled for when his work was measured. The address which was forwarded to his Lordship fully shows the satisfaction of all those concerned. As to the cash payments which his Lordship wishes to have, it will, in my opinion, work mischievously, in having a difference in the mode of settlement for those works and for the other employment which he gives, which amounts to between 2,000*l.* and 3,000*l.* a year, and may be considered permanent, whilst this is but temporary.

"All the arrangements I have made, I am happy to say, turned out for the benefit of the tenantry, for while those residing on other properties in the barony are now in a state of great destitution, his Lordship's tenantry are in possession of seed, oats, and potatoes, and are grateful for the opportunities given them. The prospect of a potato crop this year will bring matters more about, and I trust we have seen the worst. Independent of the employment given on the drainage, we are still extending relief to the destitute about Frenchpark, relieving daily at his Lordship's expense, about two hundred families."

"MR. JOHN D'ARCY TO MR. F. FRENCH.

"The tenants of Lord de Freyne's, employed by me in the drainage works, are unanimous in their gratitude for the encouragement given them. Allowing them to earn sufficient to meet their rents in the idle part of the year, and giving food to the poorest of them, has enabled them to hold and sow their lands. They have also declared to me that they are thankful for the manner in which the work has been set to them by task, which has enabled them to earn 16*d.* a day during the past winter and spring; and they earnestly request that the mode which has been adopted, and the arrangements which have been made with them, may not be altered."

ADDRESS OF THE PERSONS EMPLOYED TO LORD DE FREYNE.

"That, having heard a complaint has been made to your Lordship of the arrangements made in carrying out the drainage of your bogs,

"We, the persons employed in the Artagh district, consider it due to Mr. Hugh Kelly to declare, that we not only are grateful for the employment we have received, in a time of such general destitution, but that we consider all his arrangements satisfactory.

"That we approve of the work being executed by task, and the settlement of each portion of it when measured by the surveyor.

"That we consider it much to our advantage not being called on for rent, and our crops left at our disposal for the support of our families; and that, whether we receive the price of our work in silver, or by a cheque payable when presented, we intend, in either case, to appropriate the amount so earned in the payment of rent.

"We cannot conclude without conveying to your Lordship (as the most charitable and benevolent landlord) our blessing and that of our families; for you have not only put us in a position to be able to hold our houses and lands, but you have advanced to such of us as had not corn provisions from time to time.

"Dated this 4th day of April, 1848."

[Signed by 1,097 persons.]

Notwithstanding all these circumstances, and the satisfaction of all parties employed, Lord de Freyne desired that the order of the Commissioners should be most strictly complied with; which has been done, and all payments made since the 7th of March, the date of the circular No. 7, by the contractors, has been in cash. There was not in England or Ireland one landlord more anxious than his noble relative to do every thing in his power for the benefit of his tenants, nor was there a tenantry in Ireland more contented, nor with better reason.

DUTY ON RUM.

SIR L. O'BRIEN wished to take that opportunity of putting a question which he had brought last night under the notice of Her Majesty's Government. His object simply had been to inquire whether the right hon. Gentleman intended to adhere to the differential duty on rum originally announced on the part of Her Majesty's Government, or whether, in accordance with the wishes of the deputation, the right hon. Gentleman was prepared to adopt a differential duty more favourable to the interests of the home distiller. He begged now to repeat the question which he had put yesterday.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Since last night I have had an opportunity of laying the matter before my Colleagues; and I can assure the hon. Member that I did not give him an answer yesterday, only because I could not give it. The principle for which the West Indians contended in 1846, as that on which the subject of the spirit duties ought to be dealt with, was, that they should be put on a footing of equality with the British distiller. Last year I proposed that the difference should be 6*d.* in the duty on British and on colonial spirits. I repeated in the early part of the Session that a differential duty of 6*d.* would be adequate. Since that time I have introduced a measure for the benefit of the distillers; and in accordance with the views of those whose opinion is entitled to the highest respect on such a subject, and who think that 4*d.* is a sufficient differential duty between British and colonial spirits, the proposition now before the House has been made by Her Majesty's Government. I have submitted to my Colleagues the representations made by the Irish Members yesterday; and they have seen in those representations no reason to change the views they previously entertained of the measure which has been laid before Parliament, and which, in the opinion of Mr. Wood, the Chairman of Excise, is sufficient to afford the protection which is fairly required for the British distiller, and sufficient to compensate the colonial distiller for the disadvantages under which he labours.

THE WRIT FOR DERBY.

SIR J. PAKINGTON moved—

"That Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new Writ for electing two Burgesses to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Derby, in the room of the right honourable Edward Strutt and the honourable Edward Frederick Leveson Gower, whose Election has been determined to be void."

Writs had been issued in various other cases; and he did not see why the writ for Derby should not also be issued. It was true the writ for Yarmouth had not been issued; but it had been intimated that as soon as the Bill of the hon. Member for the Flint boroughs received the Royal Assent, it would be proposed to issue that writ. Was it intended to disfranchise the town of Derby? Believing that there were no sufficient grounds to justify the suspension of the writ, he should move that it now be issued.

MR. HUME would remind the House that the hon. Member had himself stated that corruption was now more rife, and bribery more unblushing than ever. Yet the hon. Member called on the House, with the facts before them, to issue the writ in this case. If he could believe it was the intention of the hon. Member to hold up the House really to the contempt of the people, he might congratulate him on his success; for the proceedings of late, as to these cases of bribery, appeared eminently calculated to draw down that contempt on the House. One day the House refused to issue a writ—another day they consented. This was the case of a writ which had been refused three or four times. It was recorded of Derby that the practices which had prevailed at the last election had existed for many former elections. On that ground he thought an example ought to be made, and the writ suspended till an inquiry had taken place.

Sir J. TYRELL had enjoyed the honour of having a seat in that House before the Reform Bill. During many weeks the hon. Member for Montrose (Mr. Hume) dwelt on the great advantages which would accrue to the country when the Reform Bill passed. The hon. Member then occupied as large a space in the public mind, and occupied still more largely, if possible, the time of that House, in what he (Sir J. Tyrell) considered at the time very useless and hopeless prognostications on his part. The hon. Member had now come forward to get up a little measure of his own. He (Sir J. Tyrell) confessed that it was matter of comparative indifference to him what might be the details of the hon. Gentleman's measure. He had moved for a return from which it would be seen that the hon. Member for Montrose, though he assumed the peculiar guardianship of the public purse, had succeeded by "polishing the knocker" of the Treasury, in getting a place for one of his family which was worth some 500*l.* a year. He thought he should be in a condition to show that it was one of those useless commissions which the hon. Gentleman so loudly condemned. When he had obtained his returns, and completed his budget, he expected to be able to show that large sums were obtained by several other hon. Members.

Mr. ELLICE appealed to the hon. Member for Essex, whether it was right to introduce this personal matter, with respect to the hon. Member for Montrose. He (Mr. Ellice) believed that the son of his hon. Friend (Mr. Hume) held and executed with efficiency an office of no great value in the public service. He believed that he had been appointed without the solicitation, or even without the knowledge, of the hon. Member for Montrose, to be secretary of a valuable commission now sitting, to inquire into the management of the Mint. [*A laugh.*] Hon. Gentlemen might laugh, but he believed the inquiry was an important one; and he considered that one of the best practices lately introduced into Parliament had been to appoint commissions composed of scientific and intelligent men to inquire into a number of subjects which had been too long left to Committees of that House.

Mr. P. BENNET said, that having been a Member of the Committee on the Derby election, he begged to mention that there were 166 cases of bribery set down for inquiry, and that, after investigating the first ten, Mr. Wrangham, the counsel for the sitting Members, threw up his case. There was an unanimous feeling on the part of the Committee, that there ought to be an inquiry into the case.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said, that after the charge which had been made by the hon. Baronet the Member for Essex (Sir John Tyrell), he thought it necessary to say a few words in defence of the Government, as well as of the hon. Member for Montrose. The hon. Baronet had charged the Government with having proposed a useless commission for inquiring into the Mint, and with having appointed a relative of the hon. Member for Montrose to the situation of secretary. With respect to the first point, he (Mr. Labouchere) felt bound to say that, having once filled the office of Master of the Mint, he became convinced that that establishment very much required investigation and reform, and, accordingly, he felt it his duty to move for the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the subject. ["Question!"] He must say he thought it very hard that, after an attack had been made, it was not allowed to be answered. If hon. Gentlemen opposite had felt it to be their duty to call "Question" when the worthy Baronet the Member for Essex introduced this irrelevant matter, and travelled out of the subject before the House, it would have been much more to their credit than calling "Question" now. He felt that a few words were due to the hon. Member for Montrose. He had differed on many important subjects from that hon. Member. He had voted against him, he believed, as often as with him; but this he would say for him, that no individual that had ever sat in that

House had ever brought to the public service more entire disinterestedness than that hon. Member; and of this he was quite sure, that if the objects of the hon. Member had been sordid and personal, and if he had devoted a tithe of the industry, ability, and unwearied exertion which he had used in the public service to the promotion of these objects, he might easily have attained them—just as many men of far inferior qualities had attained them. But he had trodden another path, and he had his reward in the approbation of the country and the esteem of all the Members of the House, whatever were their political opinions. He said that the more freely because he was strongly opposed to many of the opinions held at the present moment by his hon. Friend; but, having sat with him many years, he had thought it due to him, in common justice, as well as due to his own feelings, to make this declaration with respect to him.

Lord J. RUSSELL: I beg to say, that the measure proposed by the hon. Member for Flint (Sir J. Hanmer) has been supported by the Government. But owing to the opposition—I do not say the unfair or factious opposition — which the Bill has encountered, both on its second reading and in Committee, a great delay has taken place, and further delay will doubtless take place before the Bill can pass. I think, then, that it would be unfair towards the borough of Derby to insist upon completing the inquiry before the writ shall be issued; for it is obvious, I think, that as the matter at present stands, the inquiry cannot be completed till after the prorogation of Parliament; and, therefore, it would not be until next Session that any remedy could be applied with respect to this borough. I should certainly have hesitated in voting for the issuing of this writ if the House had not decided as they have done in the cases of Horsham and Cheltenham; but, having done so, it appears to me that the best course now to pursue will be for me to give my vote in favour of issuing the writ.

Mr. THORNELY had a strong feeling on this subject with reference to the tribunal by which election petitions were tried. This was the first Parliament which had assembled since the passing of the Act of 1844 for the trial of controverted elections; and, though the country at large had little confidence in Election Committees generally, yet the experience they had had of the working of this Act had given universal satisfaction. He had on every occasion voted against the issuing of the writ in cases like the present, because, in his opinion, it was the duty of the House to sustain the decision of their Election Committees. There had been a great many petitions presented against the return of Members, which never went to trial. And why? Because, after the admirable decision of the Committee in the case of Great Yarmouth, the sitting Members and the petitioners came to an understanding with each other, thinking that the Election Committees were now so honest that if the petitions went to trial the boroughs would be disfranchised. There were many Members sitting in that House now who would not be there if the petitions had not been withdrawn. He regretted the decision of the Government on the present occasion. In his opinion every other business should been set apart until they had carried a Bill to have an investigation in every borough where a Member had been unseated.

Sir R. PEEL: I stated on a former occasion that in my opinion it was the duty of the House to have postponed all other business until they had determined the course they should take with respect to the question of further inquiry into these cases. Now, I well know the important avocations of the noble Lord, and the extent of important business which presses upon the Government; but I still retain the opinion that it was the duty of the noble Lord to have made some proposition to the House, when there was such a multitude of instances of proved corruption brought under our notice, with a view of instituting some new inquiry. There might have been a Committee of the House, or a Bill might have been introduced, reciting in the preamble that many cases of corruption had been proved to have taken place, and providing that a new tribunal should be appointed for entering fully into the subject; and it is my opinion that if the Government had proposed that course the House would in one night have assented to it. [Lord J. Russell: The debate on the Bill of the hon. Member for the Flint boroughs occupied three nights.] But I have had some experience in these matters; and I know it is a perfectly different thing a private individual bringing forward such a question, and a Member of the Government coming forward to make a proposal and saying, "If you object on the second reading to the principle of this Bill, you are responsible for it." And I believe that under the very peculiar circumstances of the case—under the demand for a fresh alteration in the constitution of this House—and under the apprehension that these instances of corruption exist to a great degree in large towns—the confidence you created in the settlement of 1832 would have been unanimous that you were determined to correct abuses; and I think upon deliberate consideration the House of Commons would have confirmed such a course. If these inquiries be incomplete, the House of Commons should appoint a tribunal specially constituted, with power to examine these matters, and it should be appointed to adjudicate upon questions of private rights rather than upon general questions. Now, what is the case here? The hon. Gentleman says you are about to issue this writ; and he says that in this case of Derby the corruption was not confined to the freemen, according to his opinion, and what he believed to be the unanimous impression of the Committee; but in only a few instances was there actual bribery. But he says—

> "There were 160 cases brought before us; we took the first ten, and in every one of these instances the bribery was brought home. It was proved that 200 persons were brought into a room for the purpose of bribery, and those who could take a bribe did take it."

The hon. Gentleman is fairly entitled to full credit for the testimony he gives; and what is his statement with respect to the impression of the Committee on the evidence brought before them in this case? He says, that so soon as it was brought home to a few persons that bribes had been given, the Committee were satisfied, and considered that they were released from further proceeding. It appears, then, that there were many cases of alleged bribery, and that in the first ten which were examined, the parties charged could not bear the ordeal, and bribery was brought home to them. I still adhere to the opinion I expressed on a former occasion. I think there ought to be some further inquiry; and, until that inquiry has been made, I must continue to give my vote against the issuing of the writ.

Sir R. H. INGLIS said, the report was presented on the 28th of March, and he would ask whether sufficient time had not elapsed to justify those who urged the issuing of this writ in supposing that the House was not prepared to make such inquiry as was now called for? The right hon. Baronet who had just spoken, said, that 160 cases of alleged bribery had been brought forward; but he would observe, that not more than nine were proved to be guilty; and, as the constituency of Derby consisted of 1,826 voters, were the 1,660 to be disfranchised, because the others were suspected of accepting bribes?

Mr. S. HERBERT said, the hon. Member for the University of Oxford begged the question when he said that, because 160 persons were charged with bribery, they were going to punish the whole constituency. But what was asked for was not punishment in the first instance, but inquiry, with a view to punishment if the guilt were proved.

Mr. BRIGHT said, he had been sitting on an Election Committee for the last month, and he considered himself a victim of a system the most corrupt and frightful as respected an honest representation that could be conceived. He should not be expressing his opinion honestly if he did not say that the delay which had taken place as to the Bill of the hon. Member for the Flint boroughs, and as to this writ, was owing to the vacillating conduct of the Government.

Mr. COBDEN said, if an hon. Member rose at a quarter to seven o'clock, he was put down by those who wanted to dine, and if he rose at ten o'clock, then he was put down by those who had dined. He agreed with his hon. Friend the Member for Manchester in thinking that the noble Lord the Member for the city of London ought to have been in the House to prevent the writ for Horsham being issued; because the noble Lord had pledged himself to bring in a Bill to deal with that case, and if he had been there, he would have prevented the writ being issued. However they might deal with this question in that House, it would be dealt with out of doors on a much larger basis. This was part and parcel of an outward and visible sign of a system of corruption that prevailed, and was the reason why this question was treated with so much levity and party clamour. He held in his hand a petition signed by a respectable person, and every word in that petition he believed to be true, praying that the borough of St. Albans might be put into the Bill of the hon. Member for the Flint boroughs. The petition stated that at the last election the bribery was open and unblushing; that bad as it had been before, never was it so unblushing as on that occasion; that the two hon. candidates who succeeded in being elected were diametrically opposed in their opinions, the one being a Conservative, the other a Radical; yet their election was conducted by the same agent, and the bribery and corruption were paid out of the same purse; and this gentleman told them in that petition that out of 400 persons who voted, there were not 50 who had not taken a bribe. From an investigation he (Mr. Cobden) had made, he was sure that the majority of Members of boroughs sent from England to that House, were returned either by bribery, or corruption, or patronage. That was his deliberate opinion after having taken pains to look into it. Could they say that that House was a fit tribunal even to deal with these cases? In 1841, when he was first returned to that House, he ventured to suggest that either the Attorney General or a prosecuting attorney should be appointed to deal with cases of criminality in election proceedings as soon as the Committee left the room. He agreed that under the Act of the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) they were enabled to find out cases of corruption. But what did the House do? It sent the parties back again, and issued writs enabling them to sell their votes again. He believed that hon. Gentlemen opposite would not allow the Bill of the hon. Baronet (Sir J. Hanmer) to pass; but what ought the Government to have done? They should have brought in a Bill at the commencement of the Session to disfranchise Harwich, Horsham, Kinsale, and those other small and corrupt boroughs that ought never to have had Members, and to transfer the representation to such populous places as Kensington, Staleybridge, Barnsley, and the like. If the Government had done that they would have pursued a far more conservative course than they were doing at the present moment. The country would see now how far the House was disposed to deal honestly with these cases, and they would come to the conclusion that the only solution for these difficulties was to improve the Reform Bill, as that, in its turn, had been an improvement on the former system. It was a remarkable thing that where the Reform Bill had given the representation to large constituencies, like London and Manchester, untainted by the old freemen, the House had never had an election petition from those places. The only remedy for these corrupt cases was to give the representation to large constituencies untainted by freemen, and to give the constituencies the protection of the ballot.

Mr. REPTON begged to be allowed, as the borough which he had the honour to represent (St. Albans) had been alluded to by the hon. Member for the West Riding, to state that, until he arrived at the hustings on the morning of the election, he never saw his hon. Colleague, nor had he held any communication either with him or any of his agents. If such an arrangement had been entered into as had been described by the hon. Member, he would deny in the most solemn manner that he (Mr. Repton) had anything to do with it, either directly or indirectly. If the facts were truly described in the petition, why had it not been presented earlier, so that the House might have referred it to a Committee of Inquiry?

The House divided:—Ayes 97: Noes 112; Majority 15.

List of the AYES.

Anstey, T. C.
Baldock, E. H.
Bellew, R. M.
Benbow, J.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Beresford, W.
Berkeley, hon. Capt.
Bolling, W.
Bremridge, R.
Brooke, Lord
Buller, C.
Burrell, Sir C. M.
Butler, P. S.
Cholmeley, Sir M.
Christy, S.
Clive, H. B.
Collins, W.
Conolly, Col.
Deedes, W.
Duckworth, Sir J. T. B.
East, Sir J. B.
Edwards, H.
Farrer, J.
Forster, M.
French, F.
Fuller, A. E.
Galway, Visct.
Godson, R.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Grace, O. D. J.
Greene, T.
Grogan, E.
Grosvenor, Lord R.
Gwyn, H.
Henley, J. W.
Herries, rt. hon. J. C.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hobhouse, T. B.
Hodgson, W. N.
Hudson, G.
Hughes, W. B.
Humphery, Ald.
Ingestre, Visct.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Kerrison, Sir E.
Knox, Col.
Labouchere, rt. hon. H.
Lascelles, hon. E.
Lewis, G. C.
Mackenzie, W. F.
Mackinnon, W. A.
M'Cullagh, W. T.
Maher, N. V.
Mahon, Visct.
Maitland, T.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Melgund, Visct.
Miles, P. W. S.
Miles, W.
Mullings, J. R.
Muntz, G. F.
Neeld, J.
Neeld, J.
Newdegate, C. N.
O'Brien, J.
O'Brien, T.
O'Connell, M. J.
O'Connor, F.
Ossulston, Lord
Palmerston, Visct.
Rendlesham, Lord
Repton, G. W. J.
Rice, E. R.
Robinson, G. R.
Rushout, Capt.
Russell, Lord J.
Rutherfurd, A.
Seaham, Visct.
Seymer, H. K.
Shelburne, Earl of
Sibthorp, Col.
Sidney, Ald.
Smith, rt. hon. R. V.
Smyth, Sir H.
Smyth, J. G.
Sotheron, T. H. S.
Spooner, R.
Talfourd, Serj.

Tufnell, H.
Tyrell, Sir J. T.
Urquhart, D.
Waddington, H. S.
Wall, C. B.
Walsh, Sir J. B.
Willoughby, Sir H.
Wilson, J.
Wilson, M.

TELLERS.

Pakington, Sir J.
Stafford, A.

List of the Noes.

Adair, R. A. S.
Anderson, A.
Armstrong, Sir A.
Baines, M. T.
Barkly, H.
Barnard, E. G.
Bernal, R.
Blackstone, W. S.
Bouverie, hon. E. P.
Brotherton, J.
Brown, H.
Burke, Sir T. J.
Buxton, Sir E. N.
Callaghan, D.
Campbell, hon. W. F.
Chaplin, W. J.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.
Cobden, R.
Cochrane, A. D. R.W.B.
Cockburn, A. J. E.
Corbally, M. E.
Corry, rt. hon. H. L.
Davie, Sir H. R. F.
D'Eyncourt, rt. hon. C. T.
Drumlanrig, Visct.
Duncan, G.
Duncuft, J.
Dunne, F. P.
Estcourt, J. B. B.
Evans, J.
Evans, W.
Fagan, W.
Fagan, J.
Fordyce, A. D.
Frewen, C. H.
Gladstone, rt. hon. W. E.
Glyn, G. C.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Greenall, G.
Greene, J.
Guest, Sir J.
Hallyburton, Lord J. F.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Hardcastle, J. A.
Hastie, A.
Hayes, Sir E.
Hayter, W. G.
Henry, A.
Herbert, rt. hon. S.
Hervey, Lord A.
Heywood, J.
Hindley, C.
Hood, Sir A.
Horsman, E.
Hutt, W.
Keogh, W.
King, hon. P. J. L.
Langston, J. H.
Lemon, Sir C.
Lincoln, Earl of
Lindsay, hon. Col.
Lushington, C.
Mangles, R. D.
Marshall, J. G.
Marshall, W.
Martin, J.
Martin, S.
Matheson, Col.
Milner, W. M. E.
Molesworth, Sir W.
Monsell, W.
Morris, D.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Mowatt, F.
Norreys, Lord
Norreys, Sir D. J.
Nugent, Lord
Ogle, S. C. H.
Osborne, R.
Parker, J.
Pattison, J.
Pearson, C.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Pendarves, E. W. W.
Perfect, R.
Pigott, F.
Pilkington, J.
Pugh, D.
Ricardo, O.
Richards, R.
Robartes, T. J. A.
Romilly, Sir J.
Sadlier, J.
Simeon, J.
Smith, J. A.
Smith, J. B.
Smythe, hon. G.
Somerton, Visct.
Spearman, H. J.
Stanton, W. H.
Strickland, Sir G.
Stuart, Lord D.
Thicknesse, R. A.
Thompson, Col.
Thornely, T.
Trelawny, J. S.
Villiers, hon. C.
Wawn, J. T.
Williamson, Sir H.
Wood, W. P.
Wyvill, M.
Young, Sir J.

TELLERS.

Bennet, P.
Hume, J.

SUGAR DUTIES—ADJOURNED DEBATE—(THIRD NIGHT).

On the Order of the Day for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Sugar Duties,

Sir JOHN PAKINGTON said, that as the hon. Member for Westbury had accused him in his speech last night of having been guilty of very great inaccuracy in stating the expense of raising sugar in Cuba and Porto Rico, he trusted that the House would allow him to explain briefly the grounds on which his statement had been founded. He had stated that the average cost of producing sugar in Cuba, Porto Rico, and Brazil, was but 6*s.* 10½*d.*, whereas the statement of the hon. Member last night was, that the average cost was 14*s.* 8*d.* Now this was an enormous difference, and he wished to say that he was prepared to re-assert his belief that the figures which he had given to the House were perfectly accurate, and that the figures given by the hon. Member for Westbury were erroneous to the extent of the difference between them. And he should add his belief, with all respect to the hon. Member for Westbury, that the hon. Gentleman did not appear to have attentively read the evidence on which he had grounded his argument, and that he had not allowed for the necessary deductions in the expense of production—such as the interest on the capital invested, and the value of the rum and molasses. He also believed that the hon. Member for Westbury had neglected to take another important consideration into account. The hon. Gentleman must be aware that all the sugar sent home from the colonies was muscovado, and that all the sugar which came from Cuba and Brazil was clayed sugar; and he believed that he was right in stating that 4 cwt. of clayed sugar would yield as much refined sugar as 5 cwt. of muscovado sugar. He was aware that there was more expense attending the manufacture of clayed than of muscovado sugar; but on the other hand, he had a right to set the waste in manufacture against that increased expense; and he held that he was entitled to deduct one-fifth from the cost of the manufacture of Cuban sugar. In addition to this, he found that in the account sent home by Mr. Crawford from the Havana, he estimated the cost of producing sugar there to be about 8*s.* 4*d.* per cwt., or one penny a pound, to which he added the interest on the capital employed at 6 per cent, raising the cost per pound to 1 3-7*d.* Again, Mr. Harbottle, who was, he believed, a witness, called by the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Moffatt), estimated the value of the rum and molasses at 1*s.*, which he had also a right to deduct from the cost. Allowing for all those items, the difference between the value of clayed and muscovado sugar, the interest on capital, the cost of replacing negroes, the amount of local taxation, and the value of the molasses, the net cost would just amount to 6*s.* 8*d.*, the sum that he had allowed. Again, in Porto Rico, it appeared from the statement of Mr. Overmann, a planter in that island, that the cost of production, independent of the charge for conveyance, was from 2*s.* 10*d.* to 3*s.* 5*d.* The last point on which he would trouble the House was the cost of production in Brazil. According to the evidence of Mr. Porter, of Bahia, it would appear that out of the 16*s.* 5*d.* the hon. Gentleman ought to have deducted 4*s.* for the interest on capital, and 1*s.* for the value of the molasses, and, allowing one-fifth of the remainder for the difference between the muscovado and clayed sugar, they would have 8*s.* 9*d.* as the cost per cwt., as he had stated. Taking, then, the cost for the three places—Cuba, Porto Rico, and Brazil—the general average would be precisely 6*s.* 10½*d.*, being the amount which he had stated it to be.

MR. JAMES WILSON would not detain the House by entering again into all these details, but he thought that the hon. Baronet laboured under a misapprehension, when he talked of deducting the value of rum and molasses from the 8*s.* 9*d.*, or thinking that rum and molasses entered at all into the manufacture of clayed sugar. He was much mistaken, or else the fact was, that rum and molasses were the result of the manufacture of muscovado sugar only. At the same time, he would not say but that had the statement of the hon. Baronet on Monday night been accompanied with the explanation which he had now given— [Sir J. PAKINGTON: So it was, though not so fully.] If the explanation of the hon. Baronet had been as full on Monday, he should not have alluded at all to it, because parties would then have had an opportunity of judging for themselves. There was also another statement of the hon. Baronet to which he would refer, namely, the difference which he drew between the value of clayed and muscovado sugar. Of course there was a difference in the value of the two articles; and when any one spoke of the cost price of one or the other of those sugars, that difference was always taken into consideration.—Order of the day read.

MR. PHILIP MILES said, that the hon. Member for Westbury had only questioned the accuracy of the details gone into by the hon. Baronet to the extent of the 1*s.* which he allowed for molasses, but that 1*s.* would not have made the difference between 16*s.* 4*d.* and 6*s.* 10½*d.* The hon. Member had also asserted that molasses were not produced in the manufacture of clayed sugar; but he begged to differ from the hon. Gentleman on that point, and to tell him that though the same amount of rum and molasses was not made from clayed sugar as from muscovado sugar, still there was a very considerable quantity produced in the manufacture of the clayed sugar. He thought that the explanations offered by the hon. Baronet were perfectly satisfactory, and that his results were completely borne out by the facts; and when the hon. Member for Westbury made this statement the other night, and founded so great a part of his argument upon it, he thought that the hon. Member ought to have been more certain of the accuracy of what he was stating, considering that he spoke with all the authority which belonged to him as a Member of the Government, and as being, as was generally supposed, the author of this measure; and that he ought to have more fully and carefully considered the figures which he put before the House. He should go farther than his hon. Friend, and call the attention of the House to the hon. Member's comments on the evidence of Mr. Harbottle, as given before the Committee. The hon. Member for Westbury had stated that, according to Mr. Harbottle, the cost of producing sugar upon unencumbered estates was 15*s.* 3*d.* per cwt., and upon estates encumbered with debt 19*s.* 4*d.* per cwt., irrespective of the interest upon capital, the replacement of slaves, the shipping charges, and the commission of merchants. He took the hon. Gentleman's statement from the public papers, as well as from having heard him deliver the speech; but on turning to the top of the page from which the hon. Member had quoted, he found Mr. Harbottle make the following deductions:—

	Dollars.
Interest at 6 per cent	8,202
Maintenance of negroes, at 40 dollars each per annum	12,000
Depreciation of capital on machiery, 15 per cent on 18,500 dollars	2,775
Ditto on cattle, on 1,200 dollars, at 8 per cent	96
Ditto and mortality on negroes, 105,000 dollars, at 6 per cent ...	6,300
Dollars ...	29,373

He thought that he had convicted the hon. Member of inaccuracy in this particular; but he was further borne out by the statement of Mr. Overmann, which, if he mistook not, was laid before the Committee at the request of the hon. Member himself. At least he recollected that the hon. Member had handed the statement to him, and that he (Mr. Miles) asked to have it printed. In Mr. Overmann's statement he found the following in reference to the cultivation of estates in Porto Rico:—

> "The island of Porto Rico has about 400,000 inhabitants, of which 45,000 are slaves. There are 400 sugar estates worked, I should say by about 20,000 negroes, and they make 100,000 hogsheads of sugar which is yet manufactured in the most common way by cattle mills, and I do not think there are more than about 20 steam-mills in the island. They have likewise only few wind, and still less water mills. The larger estates can make sugar at about 60 to 75 cts. per 100 lbs., taking, of course, the amount for the molasses and rum (if they make any) against part of the expenses; but smaller estates, with perhaps not sufficient hands, or badly conducted, cannot do it at less than 1½ to 2 dollars, as there are many expenses which weigh heavier on smaller estates; but, of course, much depends on the situation of the estate and the fertility of the soil, and the manner in which it is taken care of, the canes requiring to be kept very clean of weeds and grasss."

Now, when he found that statement handed in by the hon. Gentleman himself, and when it appeared from it that sugar could be grown at a cost of from 3*s.* to 3*s.* 6*d.* a hundred-weight in Porto Rico, and when he told them further, that the fertility of the soil in that island was so great that the other West India islands could not compete with it—when, with these facts before them, and they knew that, notwithstanding their defective machinery, the planters of Porto Rico were able to produce sugar at the low rate of 3*s.* to 3*s.* 6*d.*—he would ask how was it possible that the British colonies could compete with them? He thought that after this statement, given in by the hon. Gentleman himself, it was strange that he could still maintain that free labour could compete with slave labour, seeing that it was to the advantage of slave labour that Porto Rico owed all its facilities. It had been argued by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Gladstone) that relief ought to be extended to the West India colonies, because no assistance had been given to them since the emancipation of the negroes. He thought that a good argument, but he would go farther. He could not forget that before emancipation the colonies often did compete with other countries, even though they had but a mitigated slavery to contend against unmitigated slavery elsewhere; and in taking away that labour the Parliament diminished their production one half. They further gave them no assistance in controlling the labourers, but on the contrary did everything to prevent such control, and to thwart free emigration. That being the case, he would say that the House ought to give fresh assistance to the colonies, in order that they might compete—if ever they could compete—with slave labour. He admitted that many restrictions which had pressed heavily on the colonies had been removed; but he contended that all the remaining restrictions ought to be taken away, for if they were to have free competition, that competition ought to be commenced on equal terms. He would say further, that protection was necessary in order to preserve the very existence of the colonies themselves, and to prevent the entire abandonment of the cultivation of sugar. If they did not consent to give protection for a limited period—for he did not ask for permanent protection, knowing that it would become negative with increased production in the colonies—the cultivation of sugar must be abandoned. They asked but for a fair trial, and it was most un-English to refuse it. He held in his hand returns from a vast number of estates, containing the instructions sent out by the principle mercantile houses in this country to nearly every island in the West Indies. The first was from one of the largest mercantile houses in London, and they said—

> "Being determined not to allow ourselves to be drawn into any further advances, we have resolved to place and conduct the several accounts on the following footing, viz., we shall accept bills drawn for the current expenses of carrying on the cultivation of the estates to the extent of 8*l.* per hogshead of 42 inch truss (and other sizes in proportion) of muscovado sugar in the crops, to be shipped as made and cured, to be drawn for monthly or quarterly, and the sum monthly to be estimated on the growing crops by our attorney or his nominee.
>
> "With regard to our own properties, we wish them to be dealt with in one of the following ways, viz.:—1. To be let on a lease of three or five years to safe and responsible parties. 2. If it cannot be rented, then to be cultivated, the expense being limited to 10*l.* per hogshead of sugar made, if it can be satisfactorily shown that the cost will not exceed this. 3. If either of the above modes cannot be effected, then to cease any further expenditure in cultivation after the present crop is taken off, and no expense to be incurred beyond what is absolutely necessary for the preservation of the property. The estate is

not to be at any further expense to the proprietors for managers, overseers, or others beyond watchmen. Should any of the parties we have named not come into and act upon these arrangements, they must look to others to furnish the means of carrying on their operations, and take measures for paying off their debts."

This letter applied to upwards of thirty estates in the West Indies; and the replies received were in substance—

"The limits you have given for advances on shipments on sugar may enable the planters to sake off the crops now in course of reaping; but as the labour alone for a whole crop will come to more than our sugars are now realising, we apprehend that the further cultivation of these colonies must cease."

The next letter he should read was from a resident proprietor of seven unencumbered estates in Jamaica:—

"I beg you will distinctly understand that your reply to this must instruct me whether or not you intend to carry on. For my part, after perusing the comparative statements of stocks, consumption, and prices received by last packet, we have, I think, no chance whatever this year; and I must candidly tell you, that unless our produce is reduced to a nominal duty, I for one will stop cultivation altogether. This will be the last year for four estates out of five. As it is, many have not a farthing to take the crops off with, and I verily believe that the less sugar we make, the less we shall lose. Moreover, I very much doubt whether it would not be wise not to make a grain of sugar on Bellfield this year. It is hardly possible for any man out of Jamaica to conceive the distress of this colony, and I am quite aware that all the others, with probably the exception of Barbadoes, are in as lamentable a predicament. My efforts are perfectly paralysed—I have worked cheaper than any man in this parish or anywhere else, and now I am done up."

He would not weary the House with those statements farther, but he begged to say that he had them from some hundred estates in the West India colonies, and that they were all in a similar strain. He thought these afforded a tolerably satisfactory proof to the House of the ruin to which they had exposed the colonies; and as an instance of their present condition he might remark that not a single sixpence could be raised in this country on the best estates in any of the islands. He was not exaggerating the facts. It was clear that, unless matters were as he had described them, the proprietors would not abandon the cultivation of their estates. They had often before heard of West Indian distress, but he believed that this was the first time they had the fact before them of proprietors giving up the cultivation of their estates. Lord Harris, writing from Trinidad, used the following remarkable words:—

"I am not aware whether any portion of the sum of 200,000*l.*, granted as a loan, could be applied to the immediate relief of the colony; but I can assure your Lordship that such assistance is of vital importance, and would prove an incalculably greater boon than any immigration at the present time. I receive daily the account of orders being received for weeding or cultivation to be carried on on estates for the next year's crop; and these orders from large English merchants, to whom, up to the present time, the influx of money may be attributed, and who have worked their properties on the most liberal terms.

The hon. Gentleman had reminded them last night that they had heard of the distress in those colonies before; but familiar as they were with the fable of the shepherd and the wolf, he would remind them that without they applied sufficient relief, and that speedily, to these colonies, they would cease to exist as sugar-producing countries. If they did not interfere at once, all the capital, all the skill, all the enterprise that existed, would be utterly wasted, and the machinery exported from the colonies to Cuba even more generally than it was at present. If the planters could not compete with slave labour now, how much would they be evidently less able to do so by and by, when the means which they still possessed were exhausted, and when the capitalists in this country refused to advance them any more money? and therefore, the utter ruin which he foretold must be the consequence. It had been stated over and over again in the Committee, that the cost of labour on many of the estates equalled very nearly the net profits of the cultivation, and that it amounted on the average to at least two-thirds of the profit. He would call hon. Members' attention to the fact that, notwithstanding this great cost of labour, large sums had been invested within the last few years in providing the colonies with machinery. An immense number of agricultural implements—of ploughs, harrows, and horses, had been sent out; and, in some places, even the sub-soil plough had been introduced. He held in his hand a return of 1,015 ploughs, 341 winnowing machines, and 324 pulverisers and rollers imported into the colonies; and one maker had told him that he had sent out himself, since 1838, no less than 968 ploughs to the West Indies. The hon. Member for Westbury had spoken of the great reduction in the wages of labour in the colonies latterly. He admitted that a reduction had taken place, but in British Guiana the reduction was not more than 5 per cent. In Trinidad, with which he was himself connected, it had been nearly one-half, or 50 per cent, and in some of the other colonies it averaged, he believed, about 25 per cent; but he would remind the House that, at present, the wages in Trinidad averaged 1*s.* 3*d.* per day, of four or five hours' labour, though it was there that the greatest reduction had taken place. The hon. Member for Westbury said the fall in prices was not attributable to the Bill of 1846, but to the commercial distress that had prevailed. This opinion was erroneous, because the decrease in price had taken place in the face of a greatly increased consumption—an increase of more than 30,000 tons last year, and actually before the commercial distress began to be felt. The Bill, however, which had so diminished the price of colonial produce, had, in point of fact, raised the price of slave produce in this market by at least 7*l.* per ton, and to that extent at least the slave planter had been enriched. As he had mentioned that in consequence of the want of protection the estates would be abandoned, he would state what he meant by abandoning them. The most correct definition of it was, the cessation of cultivation. It might be one or two years before they would be actually abandoned in the proper sense of the word, because in the meantime it might be worth the while of the planters to keep up small establishments in order to convert their canes into sugar and rum. But there were some estates on which it would not pay to do even this. The effect, therefore, of the present measure would be still more seriously felt in the colonies at the end of two years, than at present; and he thought that, when that time arrived, the British consumer would have to depend more upon Cuba and Brazil for a supply of sugar, than upon our own colonies; for he believed that their supply would be exceedingly diminished, and that from neither Barbadoes nor Antigua might we expect any at all. So that after all the blood and treasure we had wasted in the suppression of the slave trade, we would probably find ourselves in the year 1850, dependent upon the produce of slave labour for our principal supply of sugar; and the British consumer might find the price of the article very seriously enhanced, the monopoly being almost altogether in the hands of the foreigners, and our own once flourishing colonies in a state of ruin and decay. He did not intend to use any harsh expressions towards hon. Gentlemen who held free-trade principles; but he must express his conviction that their political economy was inconsistent, when they consented to employ large squadrons upon the coast of Africa to suppress the slave trade, and then called upon the slave-growing countries to send us their sugar at the cheapest rate. On a review of the whole case, and after much consideration of the evidence he had heard, he had come to the conclusion that, unless the British planter could afford to sell his sugar at 20*s.* in bond, it would be better for him to discontinue its production altogether. He confessed, too, he had been disappointed in the statement of the noble Lord, inasmuch as he expected to see in it some approach to the principle of an *ad valorem* duty upon West Indian produce. That would have enabled the planters to send their produce into this market in whatever shape they thought proper, and would have induced them to turn their attention to increased cultivation. Now, he would ask the noble Lord, if, in consequence of the measures of the Government, estates in the West Indies were abandoned, or sugar cultivation discontinued, to what they were to be applied? The hon. Member for Manchester had recommended the cultivation of cloves and nutmegs. These articles did not offer sufficient inducement to the capitalist to invest in the cultivation. Of that there could be no doubt; but the most important question was, what would become of the cultivation of free-grown sugar? How would the consumer in this country be benefited if the cultivation of free-grown sugar was abandoned from inability to continue it profitably? The fact was, that in such a case the consumer would be injured rather than benefited by the Act of 1846. It was a great argument with hon. Gentlemen entertaining free-trade principles, that all classes should be allowed to buy their commodities in the cheapest market. The West Indians, however, had not been allowed to go to the cheapest market for their labour; and if hon. Gentlemen were sincere in their enunciation of this principle, he contended they ought to be the first to assist them in this respect; for it was manifestly unfair to say, "You shall sell your sugar to us at our price, but you shall not be allowed to get people to cultivate it where you can." [Mr. G. Thompson: Slaves, for instance.] Yes, slaves, if need were. Gentlemen in Lancashire were accustomed to hire their labourers by the year; but until very lately the West Indian planters were not allowed to hire their labourers except by the day.

Looking into the papers and speeches upon the subject, he found that the Lancashire Gentlemen were loud in their complaints against the Ten Hours Bill; and the hon. Member for Westbury had his newspaper weekly filled with objections to the Bill. But what these Gentlemen disdained to accept, the West Indians would be glad to have. He would ask those Gentlemen how they would like, if they could only get their labourers to work for four or five hours a day, and then be called upon to compete with rivals whose labourers worked from fourteen to sixteen hours a day? If that was the case, he thought they would cry out twice as loud as the West Indians did. He doubted whether free labour could at all compete with slave labour. He once entertained the opposite opinion; but after all the evidence brought before him in Committee, he believed it could not; and of this he, at least, was satisfied, that free labour could not compete with slave labour recruited by the slave trade. To compete with Cuba and Brazil upon equal terms under these circumstances, the West Indians would require double the machinery and twice the capital; but with the experience we had of free labour, he did not think any man who thoroughly understood the case, could say that without protection it could be successful as against slave labour. At the same time, he believed that if the Colonial Office were to turn their attention seriously to the question of immigration, much good might be done. Another point of great importance in this question related to the black population of the West Indies. Some years ago he had made a visit to the West Indies, and he extended his tour to Louisiana, to Cuba, and to St. Domingo, and the prospects offered to him in this latter country were of the most painful description. The country was overrun with wood and jungle, and when he recollected the amount of sugar that used to be raised there, he could not but feel pained by the contrast, and he was led to reflect upon what the condition of the new population would be if the sugar estates were abandoned, as they had been, in St. Domingo. Lord Harris, and several other Governors, stated in their despatches that it was of the greatest importance the cultivation of sugar should be continued, because constant employment was necessary for the negroes; and without it, as was stated by Sir Charles Grey, the negroes would lapse into barbarism. He agreed with that opinion; and he contended that it was the duty of this country to avert that evil by encouraging the cultivation of sugar. He need not point out the danger to the white population that would result from a large demoralised black population. It was clear, from this consideration, that with the abandonment of estates, or the cessation of cultivation, the whites would be compelled to seek occupation elsewhere. He had heard some hon. Gentlemen say, that the fertility of the soil was not so great in the West Indies as in foreign colonies. He could not agree in that opinion. From what he had seen, there was as good land in the West Indies as anywhere; and he would say further, that the planters were as much interested in lowering the cost of production as any hon. Gentleman in the House could be, but they must have the means of doing so. He believed there was no such thing as worn-out estates; all that those estates wanted was an improved state of cultivation; and he believed that the islands of Antigua and Barbadoes, where the labour was abundant, would be able eventually to compete with foreigners, though they might not be able, henceforth, to send so much sugar as they had been accustomed to do. With regard to the Mauritius, he must say that the attention of the House must be seriously drawn to the condition of this island. A large amount of sugar might be produced there, but not at a cheap rate, because the soil was so rocky and uneven that modern implements could not be introduced, but they must depend upon the old-fashioned hoe. The island was also overburdened with a large amount of inefficient labourers. About 30,000 persons had squatted upon the Government lands, living upon theft and plunder. They had been introduced to the island in consequence of the lax regulations of the Governor; and hitherto the planters had been able to obtain no redress, though he believed they might be easily removed, if the Governor would issue a single proclamation to that effect. He had now stated the question as fairly as he could. He did not say that the West Indies were perfect, or that they could effect no improvements; but he would say that they had been driven by necessity to expedients for labour, which, if they could have obtained a regular supply, they would not have resorted to. But at present, without adequate protection, the free-producing estates of the West India colonies, though cultivated with economy and skill, were not in a condition to compete with slave-cultivated estates; and if the Government measure were carried, he feared the final success of emancipation would be greatly retarded—a result which, being regarded as a failure, would be received as the strongest argument in favour of slavery.

Mr. HAWES hoped that if he trespassed upon the attention of the House at somewhat greater length than usual, hon. Members would not deem him presumptuous in so doing, but would consider that in entering fully upon a subject so extensive, so full of details, and of such vast importance, that he was but discharging the duties of the office he had the honour to hold. He agreed with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford (Mr. Gladstone) that one part of this question was of great magnitude and passing importance. He alluded to the present and future condition of the labouring population in the West Indies. If he thought the Bill of 1846, or any Act passed with regard to the growth of sugar, involved any permanent injury to them, he would most readily avow that opinion, and be as willing as any man to vote for the repeal or alteration of that Bill. But his firm belief, after much consideration, was, that the policy they had pursued of stripping the sugar trade of its protection, and the West India trade of all restrictions, was the policy most likely to promote the welfare of the labouring population of the West Indies. He thought, also, that if the statement of the hon. Member for Bristol were true, that estates would be abandoned in consequence of the Act of 1846, and the cultivation of sugar be diminished, a case would be made out for reconsidering the principle and the policy of that measure. But he was bound to say he could not come to that conclusion. He could not directly trace the present distress prevailing in the West Indian colonies to the Bill of 1846, consequently he was decidedly of opinion it was expedient to adhere to the principles of that measure, and gradually to emancipate sugar from all protection whatever, believing that unless the way was prepared for the increasing production of our colonies competing with the rest of the world, the time was not far distant, when, though fostered by protection, competition must be encountered, and as great distress would have to be met then, as that which existed at the present moment. The question might fairly be asked, what case there was for an alteration in the Bill of 1846? The Bill of 1846 was intended to confer temporary protection upon the West Indies in their transition from a system of high protective duties to a system of free trade. It had always been held, so far as he knew, by the sternest free-traders, that, if restrictions were to be removed, the parties to be affected by that policy were fairly entitled to ask for a reasonable time to prepare for the change. The Corn Bill was an instance—the Sugar Bill was another. Neither came suddenly into operation. But why was it necessary then to modify the Sugar Bill—to interfere with its operation? Two clear and satisfactory reasons could be given for that course. In the first place, the commercial distress which had prevailed universally throughout the empire had deprived the West Indies of a portion of the time of which they might otherwise have availed themselves in order to prepare for free trade. Again, when the Bill was passed, the introduction of a superior quality of foreign sugar at the 6*s*. duty, was not contemplated—which being worth much more in the market relatively to other sugars, paid really less duty. This circumstance had deprived the West Indies of the protection intended by the Bill. For these reasons he thought they were at this moment entitled to have that protection extended to them which was contemplated by the Bill of 1846; and therefore the modification of the scale, and the extension of time, might be considered as arising out of a new and unforeseen state of circumstances. There were, however, other reasons for the Bill. The Committee of which the noble Lord was Chairman, had sat for a long time, and, as far as he could draw any inference from its proceedings, there was one concurrent opinion that the West Indies were reduced to great distress, and that it was desirable to introduce at least some measures of relief. All parties concurred that some measures of relief were due to these colonies in the peculiar condition in which they were placed by the altered policy of this country. He was not indisposed to take that view also, and to admit that under present circumstances some relief was necessary; but there were great differences of opinion as to its nature and extent. The noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) proposed in the Committee a permanent duty of 10*s*. upon West India sugar, and 20*s*. upon foreign. His object was, as far as possible, to exclude slave-grown sugar from competition with West

Indian sugar; and to effect that, he wished to impose a permanent differential duty of 10*s*. The Committee, however, did not concur in that opinion. They rejected the report of the noble Lord without a division. The Committee came to the conclusion that 10*s*. for six years was the proper amount of protection. Since that period, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford, stating to the House that he disapproved of the plan of the Government, proposed to suspend the present scale, and not reduce the duty on sugar. He could not acquiesce in that proposition. He was inclined to think that those who considered the case well would see that the plan of the Government gave more substantial relief than that of the right hon. Gentleman. That, however, was a matter for the West Indians to consider. Then, besides these plans, petitions for others had been presented. Not only were there conflicting opinions on the part of Committees and Members of that House, as to the proper measures of relief, but there were equally differences of opinion in the petitions laid upon the table. The petition presented by his hon. Friend the Member for Montrose prayed the House to reduce the sugar duties to a nominal amount, to take measures for the suppression of the slave trade, and to establish a large increase of African immigration. Another petition prayed that the resolutions of the Committee might be carried into effect. The Mauritius petition preferred a similar prayer. Liverpool had sent two petitions—one against the Act of 1846, the other in favour of retaining it. With the single exception, then, of one of the Liverpool petitions, he knew of no public expression of opinion in favour of adhering strictly to the Bill of 1846 in the present condition of the West Indies. All concurred that some additional protection should be granted to the West Indies at the present moment. The Jamaica petitioners prayed that they might be allowed the means of competing, upon equal terms, with the planters of Cuba and Brazil. They stated that Jamaica was in a state of decay, and prayed that measures of relief might be adopted, in order to restore the island to the position which it occupied previously to the abolition of slavery. The hon. Member for Bristol said that, as far as he knew, the West Indian colonies had never been in an equal state of distress. According to the hon. Member they had often cried "wolf" without reason, but now their cries were founded on truth. He (Mr. Hawes), however, would not do the West Indians that injustice, and he would show the House what statements they had made on former occasions. No language could be employed to describe a state of distress more intense, and of ruin more complete, than that which had been then employed. He would not quote from pamphlets, he would quote alone from documents of authority; and he would show the House that during the time of the greatest protection, when the slave trade prevailed, and when they possessed every advantage which legislation or protection could confer, even then they described a state of ruin universally prevailing in those islands, and in the strongest language. He held in his hand a remarkable document, copied from the journals of the House of Assembly of Jamaica, and which was well worthy the attention of the House. It was a memorial, dated in the year 1804, and the memorialists stated—

> "Although an abolition of the slave trade be an effectual, it is not the sole, means by which the West India islands may be ruined: the same object may be attained as completely, though with somewhat less rapidity, by encouraging the cultivation of sugar in the East Indies, where the fertility of the soil, the facility of immigration, the ease with which commodities are transferred by means of the existing inland navigation, the abundance of provision, the cheapness of labour, and the whole structure of society, give them an advantage which nature has denied to these islands. Every British merchant holding security upon real estates is filing bills in Chancery to foreclose, although, when he has obtained a decree, he hesitates to enforce it, because he must himself become the proprietor of a plantation, which, from fatal experience, he would rather shun. . . . Sheriff's officers are everywhere offering for sale the property of individuals who have seen better days, and who now must see their estates purchased for half their value, and less than half their original cost. All kind of credit is at an end. . . . If litigation in the courts of common law has diminished, it is from confidence having ceased, and no man parting with his property but for immediate payment or consideration. A faithful detail of the state of these colonies would have the appearance of a frightful caricature."

This was the representation of the West India planters in 1804, when high protective duties prevailed, and when the slave trade and slavery existed; and he thought it right to remind the House that the present was not the first time that the House and the country had heard of the distress of the West India islands. He defied any one to point to any statement in Lord Harris's despatches, or elsewhere, describing ruin and distress in terms stronger than in that memorial. [Mr. Bernal: That was during the war.] During the war! But those statements were not confined to periods of war. The hon. Gentleman could not escape the difficulty thus, for he would find that, in 1807, 1811, 1824, and 1832, similar statements of ruin, distress, and desolation, were made. He would only trouble the House now with the opinion of the agent at Jamaica so late as 1844. [Mr. Bernal: Yes, Jamaica.] He begged the hon. Gentleman's pardon. They extended beyond Jamaica. Here, however, was the opinion of Mr. Burge, the agent for Jamaica, in 1844. He said—

> "The condition to which this colony has been reduced has been represented by the Assembly in their memorial to Her Majesty of the 28th February: they state that the situation of the proprietary body has been more and more appalling, and that the abandonment of a great portion of the sugar cultivation must result. In almost every district the progress towards abandonment is manifest. The returns of the magistrates and other officers are most distressing, containing details of ruin perfected and peril impending."

But this was the account of the state of things under monopoly; he would challenge hon. Members to show him anything worse than that under the system of free trade. He would show them that, throughout the whole period of time, from, he believed, 1760 down to 1843, there had been one successive series of complaints of a similar description to those which they now heard from our sugar colonies in the West Indies. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Bristol had stated, that estates would be abandoned in the West Indies, and that cultivation would diminish. He unhesitatingly admitted that it would be a serious matter if there were to be any large abandonment of estates, and any serious diminution of the cultivation of sugar in the West Indies; for he began by stating, that he viewed as a matter of the greatest importance the condition of the labouring population in that colony; but when he heard of the abandonment of estates and of diminished cultivation, he turned for a reply to the account published by the Board of Trade, showing the imports from the West India colonies. He believed that the accuracy of the account from which he was about to quote could not be questioned. The return which he held in his hand gave an account of the import into the United Kingdom of sugar, molasses, rum, &c., from 1831 to 1847; and a very remarkable inference was to be drawn from a careful examination of that table. In the first place, he would state that the whole quantity introduced in the year 1831 from all the islands together was 4,103,000 cwt. Now, if they took the first ten years, from 1831 to 1841, which included a period of slavery, the period of apprenticeship, and a period also of perfectly free labour (the apprenticeship system expiring between 1838 and 1840), they would find a very remarkable result as compared with subsequent periods. In those ten years the average annual import of sugar was 171,800 tons. Then let them compare that with the succeeding seven years, commencing with 1841, which was the year when the smallest quantity of sugar was exported since 1831. The average importation of the succeeding seven years was 128,016 tons, showing a falling-off of the annual production of 53,700 tons in the last seven years, as compared with the previous average quantity of the ten years from 1831 to 1841. Now, assuming that the produce of the next three years was equal to that of the seven preceding years, the falling-off would be reduced to about 20,000 tons annually, from the whole of the West India islands, including British Guiana. Considering the increased imports from British India, the just and inevitable rivalry to which the West Indies became subject, within the first period referred to, it appeared that this decrease was capable of an explanation quite distinct from that alleged, namely, the abandonment of estates. He was far from denying that estates had been abandoned—probably coffee estates most numerously. In Guiana, estates producing cotton had been altogether abandoned for the cultivation of sugar. If, therefore, sugar estates had been abandoned to the extent alleged, the production of others had increased, for he found from the return he had referred to, that during the last four years, from 1844 to 1847, the export of sugar had increased. In 1844, the production was 2,453,000 cwt.; in 1845, it was 2,857,000 cwt.; in 1846, it was 2,152,000 cwt.; and in 1847, it was 3,202,000 cwt. There was nothing to indicate an abandonment of estates therefore, judging from this return; and when he came to take Jamaica by itself, he certainly saw nothing like an abandonment of estates there. On reference to the revenue tables he found that in 1840 the import of sugar from Jamaica was 518,541 cwt.; in 1841, it was 528,585 cwt.; and in 1842 it was 775,149 cwt. The average of those three years, then, was 608,758 cwt. Now he would take the period when the Bill of 1844 was passed, and he found that the average of the three years, 1843, 1844, and 1845, was 644,145 cwt.; and if he took the two succeeding years, 1846 and 1847, would the House believe it, the average of those two years was 662,021 cwt., so that there had been a steadily increasing import from Jamaica since the year 1841, running through the whole period of that very sugar legislation which was said to be the cause of the abandonment of estates, and the diminution of cultivation. He was disposed to look for other causes to explain the distress of our West Indian colonies. Could it be shown from experience that protection had done them any good? On the contrary, he contended that he was entitled to say from past experience, that when they had protection to the extent of monopoly, the prosperity of those colonies was not secured. But granting that a permanent protection was conceded, there was then this difficulty to contend with—the difficulty of adjusting it between colony and colony. Was the cost of production the same in each colony? Far from it. Governor Reid stated in one of his despatches, that unless they gave protection to the West Indies, all the colonies except Barbadoes would be unable to compete with slave-growing States. There was a remarkable exception in favour of Barbadoes. Antigua, again, it was known, could produce sugar much cheaper than most of the other colonies. How were they to adjust the protection in these cases? Why, protection to one colony would be a bounty to another. Mr. Marryatt, a West India proprietor, having estates in Trinidad, took really the same view of the question. The following passage occurred in his evidence, and the House would observe that Mr. Marryatt refused to speak of Trinidad alone, but said that "the whole of the estates in the West India islands could not be maintained without such a duty"—a protecting duty of 10*s.* He was asked—

> "You believe that it would restore confidence in the minds of planters in Trinidad if this country were to impose a protecting duty of 10*s.* per cwt.?—I believe that the result would be, that it would retain many estates in cultivation which will be left to take their course otherwise. That is the policy which you recommend to be adopted to raise Trinidad from its present condition?—I do not say Trinidad in particular; it applies to all the colonies. A guaranteed protecting duty of 10*s.* per cwt.?—I do not think that a less protection, or compensating duty rather, will prevent the bulk of the estates in the West Indies from being thrown out of cultivation. Then it appears that the protecting duty which you claim from Government will just precisely give you your labour for nothing?—My answer was with regard to the colonies generally; I do not speak in reference to Trinidad, but I said that the whole of the estates in the West India colonies could not be maintained without such a protecting duty."

He (Mr. Hawes) asserted that a 10*s.* duty was a tax upon the labouring population of this country to maintain the mismanagement, improvidence, and extravagance, as he should hereafter show, of the West India planter. The truth must be told in this question, and he asserted that they were asking that House to tax the people of this country to that amount to perpetuate mismanagement. The truth must not be disguised. If they stated that they wanted that protection for the benefit of the labouring population of the West Indies, he could understand that plea; but it was for no such a purpose; it was wanted only to enable them to keep up "the whole of the estates in the West Indies," whatever might be their cost of management. Now, when such a protecting duty was demanded, he would ask once more whether protection had ever done any good to the West Indies? and he challenged hon. Gentlemen opposite to point out any period in which protection had conferred any benefit upon those colonies. A ground, however, put forward by the hon. Member for Bristol for protection, was the high wages paid by the West Indian planter for labour; and he said that this was a labour question. Now really this was the first time that he (Mr. Hawes) had ever heard that high wages justified high protection. The English manufacturer paid the highest wages in the world; but he had never heard that urged as a pretext for high protection. He believed, indeed, that it was no paradox to say, that the higher the wages the cheaper the production; because wherever there were high wages there was skilled labour, and skilled labour was the most efficient labour, and afforded the best return for capital. The great fault of the West Indians had been relying too much upon mere brute labour, and not enough upon skill, upon capital, upon science, and on agricultural improvement. But Mr. Consul Crawford stated, that in Porto Rico, one of the dreaded rivals of the West Indian, the slaves were paid 1*s.* 6*d.* a day. Lord Harris also—whose testimony was entitled to the highest respect—Lord Harris stated that at Santa Cruz the wages were 1*s*. 8*d*. a day, fully equal to the wages paid in the West Indies, and yet those colonies, we were told, were flourishing. The fact was, he believed, that if their wages were higher, they would produce more largely and cheaper in the West Indies than at present, because then they would only pay for skilled labour, and it was skilled labour which they most needed at this moment in the cultivation of sugar. As a proof of the benefit of skilled labour, he need only refer to the state of the case with regard to cotton. It could not be disputed that this country was taking the raw produce of the East Indies, and sending back goods manufactured from that raw material. Now, in the East Indies they had cheap labour, whilst in England labour was dear; but nevertheless we took their raw cotton and sent it back to them in the shape of manufactured articles. The hon. Member for Bristol had alluded to the Mauritius. The Committee, however, had investigated the circumstances of that colony at great length; and he did not think that the hon. Member could have very carefully considered the evidence which had been taken before that Committee. But before going into the case of the Mauritius in detail, let him settle one point with the hon. Gentleman opposite. It was this. Did the Sugar Bill of 1846 ruin the Mauritius? for that had been stated, both in that House and in a memorial to his noble Friend at the head of the Colonial Department. He would prove to them from the mouths of Mauritian merchants themselves, that the Bill of 1846 did nothing of the kind; and he would show them that in that very year, in this colony where there was the largest supply of labour, and the lowest rate of wages known, and, of course, before the Bill of 1846 could have had any influence on the state of affairs in the Mauritius, the planters were making representations to the Government that they were ruined. They said, in a memorial, dated May, 1846—

> "An abundant crop, it is true, the largest the island ever produced, has followed a very favourable season, and the additional labour supplied by immigration; but your petitioners assert that the expenses have augmented so greatly that all interested in thr crop, except the paid labourers, are nearly without gain. The most favoured estates only, in respect of position, climate, and soil, and on which large outlays have been formerly made, have given a surplus over the expenses, and even those have barely yielded a moderate interest on the capital invested. The debt which weighs on the land remains unreduced, notwithstanding the extent of the crop, and the unexpectedly high price that has prevailed, and which every indication from England makes it more evident we cannot expect to continue."

Thus it would appear that the most favoured estates only paid their expenses. But it must be remembered that the Mauritius had been more largely supplied with labour than any other colony. Well might the Governor say in September, 1846—

> "I must confess that the whole condition of the Mauritius at this day is an enigma to me. Not two years since it was formally declared in council that could the production of the island be fixed at 100,000,000 lbs. of sugar annually, it would have nothing to fear from the competition of slave colonies."

The production has reached upwards of 120,000,000 lbs., and it is now said to be ruined. The document I have quoted was a formal report made to the Governor, by some of the principal houses in the Mauritius. Well, the Mauritius had had labour cheaper than had ever been supplied to any colony. They had produced more than that amount of sugar they estimated as necessary to make their capital pay; the conditions had been fulfilled, and yet that House was told that the Bill of 1846 had ruined them. In another memorial addressed to the Governor by an eminent house in Mauritius, dated August 6, 1846, it is said, speaking in defence of the agents or managers of estates—

> "That since finding themselves in possession of estates, they have manifested a degree of activity and energy in their endeavours to extricate themselves from the legacies which the misfortunes of this colony have bequeathed to them;"—

(Let it be remembered this was written in 1846)—

> "and which have every prospect of success, provided cheap labour be not denied them, and with which, intelligently and scientifically directed, as well in the culture as in the manufacture of our staple, they will not fear, under the blessing, of Providence, to encounter the much-apprehended competition of India, or even of Cuba or Brazil."

Now the hon. Member for Droitwich indeavoured to enlist their sympathies in behalf of personal friends, who had, he regretted to add, been ruined in the late commercial crisis, without the least reference to the circumstances of the case: such considerations, however painful to do so, he must discard. But as the cost of labour in this colony had been alluded to, he was bound to show that on this ground there was no just reason for complaint. Labour was cheaper there than in any other sugar colony. Mr. Hunter, one of the most eminent of the Mauritian merchants, who was examined before the Committee—who was largely interested in the sugar property of the Mauritius—and who was endeavouring to prove that the Coolie labour was dearer than slave labour, stated that the total cost to him of a Coolie, including wages and all his rations, was 19*l.* a year. Now, the Mauritius merchants in London had prepared a very important memorial to show the quantity of labourers employed in the cultivation of sugar, and it appeared from that statement that, in the Mauritius in 1846, taking only the number of Coolies then working in the cultivation of sugar, each Coolie produced two tons and three-fifths per head of sugar—that reduced the cost of sugar for labour in the Mauritius to 7*s.* 4*d.* per cwt., and that was taking wages at the very highest, and taking only the evidence of a witness whose object was to make the Coolies more expensive than slaves. Now he came to the cost of slave labour. Mr. Consul Crawford stated that the cost of a slave in Cuba was about 100*l.*; and Mr. Tolmé had also stated it at the same amount. Mr. Tolmé added, that the proprietor charged 3 per cent for wear and tear, and loss, and that the rate of interest in Cuba was 12 per cent. That, then, made the cost of the slave 15*l.*, being 12*l.* interest on the 100*l.*, and 3*l.* for wear and tear. Adding to that 3*l.* 11*s.* for rations, Mr. Hunter's estimate, it made the cost of the slave to the proprietor 18*l.* 11*s.* per annum. The slaves produced three tons of sugar per head, which reduced the cost of sugar in Cuba for labour to 6*s.* 3¼*d.* per cwt. The difference, then, between the cost of labour in the production of sugar in the Mauritius and in Cuba was about 1*s.* ¾*d.* per cwt. But in arriving at this result, it must not be forgotten that the estimate of the cost of Coolie labour was furnished by a witness who was endeavouring to prove that free Coolie labour was far dearer than slave labour, as the foundation of his claim for protection. But there was another point of view in which he wished to press this question upon the consideration of those hon. Members who were prepared to vote against the Government measure; and it was this—Did they think that they had any right to call upon the British Parliament to impose a large tax on the people of this empire in the shape of a protective duty on sugar, unless the West Indian proprietors were in a position to show they had availed themselves of the recent improvements in the practice of agriculture, and unless they had left nothing undone to increase the productiveness of their estates, and to cheapen the cost of manufacturing sugar? It was absurd to suppose that the West Indian planters could, with any decency, or with the slightest colour of justice, call on the British Legislature for protection which would be tantamount to a tax on the British people of from one to three millions annually, unless they were prepared to prove to demonstration that they had done every thing that was in the power of good agriculturists to do, and that they had reduced the cost of production and of manufacture to the lowest point. He very much feared that the planters, as a body, would find it a matter of extreme difficulty to demonstrate anything of the kind. He could show that as a body they were a very wasteful set of managers—that they did not manufacture their sugar economically, or produce as much as they ought. And yet they were bound to do both before they came to that House for relief. In proof of this assertion that they were wasteful managers, he could quote the authority of Dr. Shear, the eminent agricultural chemist of British Guiana. It was folly to contend that the depression and distress which existed at present, furnished an apology for the planters. Why did they not improve their estates formerly? Why did they not avail themselves of the modern improvements in the art of manufacturing sugar, when they were in the full and undisputed enjoyment of both protection and monopoly? If they had lost time—if they had been so neglectful as to permit the golden opportunity to pass without profiting by it, what claim had they now to any farther consideration on the part of that House? Dr. Shear, than whom there could be no higher authority on such a question in speaking of the planters of British Guiana, had declared it to be his opinion, that if they had adopted a more improved process, there would have been a difference in the gross produce of that colony of no less than 25 per cent. The same was equally true of all the colonies. If he turned to Trinidad, he found that precisely the same want of skill existed in that island. Lord Harris, with that sagacity and activity in the discharge of his public duties which so pre-eminently distinguished him, had offered prizes for the best essays on the culture of the cane, and the art of manufacturing sugar. If any hon. Member would take the trouble of glancing over those essays, he would see that a large increase in the revenue of the planters might be realised by an improved process of manufacture. The want of that improved process was sensibly felt in Trinidad; and what was true in this respect of Trinidad, was equally true of British Guiana, Jamaica, and the other colonies. It was, therefore, clearly the duty of the planters to manufacture according to the best and most approved process. But he would go further, and contend that it was their bounden duty to be economical in the management of their estates; and he did not hesitate to say that unless they could prove that they were so, they had no right to apply to that House for relief. It was desirable that the House should bear in mind what had been said by Mr. Wray, in his evidence before the Sugar and Coffee Planting Committee, as well as in the volume he had published with respect to the management of the West Indian colonies. The evidence of persons of such authority, and who enjoyed such opportunities of acquiring authentic information, ought to be made known to the public; for it was right that the public should understand the true state of the case. The truth, and the whole truth, ought to be revealed, when hon. Members, who were themselves connected with the West Indian interests, came forward to request the House to impose a heavy tax upon the population of these countries in the shape of a protective duty on sugar, and reject the more moderate and temporary measure of the Government. It would be well for the hon. Member for Rochester to bear that in mind. [Mr. BERNAL: I never asked for protection.] It was to be hoped, then, that the hon. Gentleman would support the measure of the Government. [Mr. BERNAL: You will see.] Mr. Wray was examined by the noble Lord, and gave evidence which proved the defective state of cultivation and management on estates. Indeed, the evidence taken before the Committee of the Legislature of Jamaica showed great variation in the cost of production. Mr. Wray gave an instance in which a proprietor having 250 head of horned cattle, worth 2,000*l.*, besides mules worth 800*l.*, 2,800*l.* in all, obtained fresh cattle every year, not in the best and cheapest market in the neighbourhood, but from a pen at a distance, at the rate of 12*l.* to 16*l.* a head, with the risk of one or more dying on the road, and one-half or one-third dying before they had been three months on the estate. There were many instances of the bad effects which resulted from delegated management. He was quite willing to admit that some estates were better managed than others; but it should be remembered that the House was now asked to impose a tax of 10*s.* for the support of all estates, without exception, in the West Indies. The fact had been proved by other authorities, by witnesses whose testimony was unimpeachable, and on the showing of persons who knew the colonies better than any hon. Gentleman in that House could pretend to know them, that the proprietors in the West Indian colonies had been wasteful and improvident. Mr. Tollemache's evidence might be quoted also in confirmation of this opinion. What, therefore, he contended for was, that so long as this charge could be sustained, they had no claim on that House for protection. But what was the opinion of the colonists themselves as to the management of estates? He was prepared to show, from the public journals published in some of those colonies, that the estates were admitted, even in the colonies themselves, to be badly managed. He was prepared to show that the fact was avowed in distinct terms by intelligent public writers in the colonies, who were exhorting the planters in this strain, "Improve your estates, reduce wages, economise the cost of production." It was quite a mistake to suppose that the colonists were unanimous in holding up the present state of things as perfect. In Jamaica and British Guiana most assuredly they were not so. He did not mean disrespect to any body, but he did not hesitate to say that it was by no means desirable that no statements should be received with reference to West Indian questions other than such as were made by parties who were themselves connected with and interested in the West India colonies. It was right that the light of colonial opinion should be let into the House. [The hon. Member read extracts from the *Berbice Gazette*, the *Trinidad Spectator*, and the *Morning Journal of Jamaica*, which contained severe animadversions on the slovenly and wasteful manner in which many of the estates in the West Indies were managed. The writers called on planters to adopt such improvements as would make the cost and quality of sugar such as not to require any protection whatever. It was stated in the *Berbice Gazette* that on one estate which was properly cultivated, sugar was produced which was worth 8*l.* or 9*l.* a hogshead more than the sugar which was manufactured according to the old plan. In the *Morning Journal* it was stated that the plough and harrow had been busy within the last year or so.] ["Hear!"] He understood that cheer. It was true that, during the last year, some improvements had been made in the mode of managing and cultivating the estates, but it should not be forgotten that during the last year it had become very evident that public opinion in this country was struggling with a gradual but with an irresistible impulse in the direction of free trade. Turning now to another subject, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford, whom he regretted not to observe in his place, seemed disposed, the other night, to take the noble Lord at the head of the Colonial Department to task for failing to send to the colonies model Bills on various subjects. Whether the right hon. Gentleman was in favour of giving to the colonial legislatures a more extended authority than they at present enjoyed, or whether he desired that the Secretary for the Colonies should be less energetic in the discharge of his public duties, and interfere less than he had heretofore done, he did not very clearly understand. He did not very clearly comprehend what it was the right hon. Gentleman recommended; and, though he had since referred to the ordinary channels of information, he had failed to gather a more accurate idea. But if it was the intention of the right hon. Gentleman to insinuate that the Colonial Office had mischievously interposed to render nugatory the judicious enactments of the colonial legislatures, he must say that he did not think that the imputation was at all warranted by the fact. He challenged hon. Members opposite to mention one single good law of the colonial legislatures that had been disallowed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The right hon. Gentleman was himself a Member of the Committee of 1836, which sat to consider the question of negro apprenticeship. The report of that Committee recommended the Government to postpone all legislation until the period of the apprenticeship had expired. It recommended that no laws regulating contracts as between master and servant should be passed until the period of the apprenticeship had determined. It was very true that many Acts were passed by the colonies on the subject of contracts between the year 1836 and 1838, and that those Acts were disallowed, expressly and distinctly, on the grounds on which the recommendation of the Committee, of which the right hon. Gentleman was himself a Member, had been based; but surely the right hon. Gentleman did not mean to cast censure on the Government for that. In the year 1838 an Order in Council of very considerable importance was issued. It established a code of laws as between master and servant. The Crown colonies were controlled by that order; but it did not extend to such of the colonies as had legislatures of their own. It was made the subject of complaint in the Crown colonies; for there the opinion prevailed very generally that the other colonies were bound to have adopted regulations in conformity with the spirit of that order, and it was thought that if the colonies with legislatures should neglect to do so, the Crown colonies would be placed at a disadvantage. In the year 1843, however, the colonies generally were entirely relieved from the operation of that Order in Council, and full authority was given them to legislate for themselves on the subject of contracts. It was quite competent for the colonies with legislatures to pass any laws they pleased. There was nothing whatever that he knew of to prevent them. The Secretary of State for the Colonies did not wish to interfere with them. He only wished to see them legislating wisely and judiciously for their own advantage. But when it was complained that the Acts that had been passed in years past by the colonial legislatures with regard to the regulation of labour had been disallowed, he begged of hon. Members to bear in mind that that disallowance was to be justified by every consideration of humanity and justice, and upon grounds which would be sanctioned by that House and by the people of England. It surely could not have escaped the remembrance of the House that most discreditable and disgraceful attempts were made at that time in the colonies to reduce the newly emancipated slave again to the condition of serfdom, and to reacquire that power by law which they had been deprived of by the Act of Emancipation. The loss of the lash was to be made up by the severity and subtlety of the law. He looked back with sorrow to what had occurred in the colonies between 1834 and 1840; and his only consolation was the reflection that he believed such things could not occur again. Nothing could exceed the severity of the laws which were at that time passed to the prejudice of the labourers. In St. Vincent an Act was passed whereby it was provided that a servant who had committed any miscarriage, or had at all misconducted himself, should be committed by the magistrates to the treadmill for an indefinite period. In Barbadoes, an Act was passed whereby persons who were found quarrelling in the streets after ten o'clock were brought before the magistrates, and visited with exemplary punishment. Trespassing on the land of any plantation, and any petty chapman wandering abroad and not duly licensed, were liable to penalties. [Mr. Disraeli: It was simply the Vagrant Act of England.] He had always heard that many distinguished men had urged grave objections against many of the provisions of the English Vagrancy Act. But it should be remembered that what rendered the case one of peculiar injustice was, that the men who enacted those laws, and who administered them, were themselves planters, and interested in the strict enforcement of the law. A similar state of things existed at Montserrat. The Acts in existence there imposed hard labour for a month for any misdemeanour, under which term were included unreasonable absence from business, wilful neglect of duty, carelessness in the use of fire, &c. The fact was, that if we looked at the whole of the colonial legislation, we should find that its tendency was to place the labouring population in the hands of the justices—the persons and liberties of the labouring population under their control—a state of things most objectionable. Who were the guardians of the labouring population? The West India Assembly was composed of planters, attorneys, and merchants. They were not the guardians of the labouring population. It was in such a state of things that the Government of that day had interfered in protection of the labouring population. The interference of the Crown, therefore, with respect to such local enactments as those to which he had alluded, he entirely approved of. The Crown, and not the members of the local legislatures, who were parties too deeply interested, was the natural and legitimate guardian of the labouring population of the West Indies, and which class was not represented. Mr. Higgins, a gentleman whose intelligence and ability were admitted, was examined before the Committee; and being asked whether he could show any useful Act of the colonial legislature that had been disallowed by the Secretary of State, admitted that he did not know one. Mr. Higgins is asked (9844)—

> "Have there been any beneficial industrial ordinances passed within the last two years, or previously, or have any beneficial ordinances of any kind been proposed from the colonies and disallowed?"

He answers—

> "I am not aware of any."

So much for the argument that the present condition of the West Indies was occasioned by injudicious interference at home. It had been said again that the Colonial Office had done nothing to prevent squatting. It was a mistake to suppose that the evil existed to any very considerable extent. The evidence did not show this to be a grievance of any magnitude. But if it were, why did not the local legislatures propose their remedy? Where squatting had been permitted, it was no easy matter to remedy it; for it was clear that if they drove the squatter into more remote districts, they would deprive the colony of his labour. If the regulations respecting squatting were too severe and too stringent, they would defeat their own object; for the squatter would be driven farther and farther from the labour market, and would be less useful to the colony than before. He had examined this question carefully. Judging from the evidence of competent witnesses, he should say that in British Guiana there was not much squatting—in Antigua there was not much—in St Vincent there was some—and in Trinidad there was some. It was not correct to say that nothing had been done to repress squatting. In Trinidad some restrictive measures were adopted by Lord Harris, which were sanctioned by the Secretary of State. Turning now to the question of a supply of labour—what was the meaning and import of this call for a large supply of labour? Was the British Treasury to pay entirely for the expense of that supply? Was it contemplated by those who called for it, that the coast of Africa, where the slave trade prevailed, should be thrown open to the British merchant, to get any supply of labour there he wanted, on any terms he chose? Was it intended that that fresh supply of labour was to be paid for out of the British Exchequer, and that those who were interested in colonial property should go to the slave coast, there to obtain labour by such means and on such terms as they pleased? Was that what was meant? The House was entitled to an explanation on that point. He had considered this question anxiously, and he was bound to inform the House that the result of his inquiries was the conviction that, if they meant to exclude that portion of the coast of Africa where the slave trade prevailed, they could not expect within any reasonable time any large supply of labour. For these reasons, he should say to the West Indian planters, "Look rather to the concentration of labour, and to the better management of your estates, and discard that rambling system which requires great numbers of labourers without any proportionate results. Do not be anxious to extend your plantations beyond the area for which you have an adequate supply of labour." But if unrestricted access was looked for to the coast of Africa, who could consent to the planter again becoming the purchaser of slaves? This, no doubt, was not intended, but free and unrestricted access to the coast of Africa must lead to this result. But his own opinion was, that there was not that amount of labour wanted that was generally supposed. The concentration of labour—the more skilful cultivation of the soil—and the more scientific manufacture of sugar—were the great desiderata. If he had half a million to-morrow, placed at his disposal, he should scarcely know where to employ it, to provide an immediate and large supply of labourers. 170,000*l.* had been voted in aid of Trinidad and British Guiana. Other colonies might wish for loans to enable them to import labour; and it was desirable they should have such facilities. From Europe a certain supply of labourers might be obtained; and from the Kroo coast of Africa, which was untainted by the slave trade, about 7,000 or 8,000, it had been reported, might be got yearly; and it was said there might be some importation of Chinese labourers: but he feared it would be very difficult to realise the expectations of those who looked forward to a supply of labour on a gigantic scale. Since 1834, the following had been the number of labourers imported into the West Indies. The population of Trinidad had been actually doubled:—

IMMIGRATION INTO THE WEST INDIAN COLONIES SINCE THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY IN 1834.

Years.	Jamaica.	B. Guiana.	Trinidad.	Minor West Indian Colonies.	Total.
In the ten years from 1834 to 1843 ...	6,200	17,784	10,688	—	34,672
1844	540	918	2,530	—	3,988
1845	606	3,631	1,635	—	5,872
1846	1,170	11,519	2,935	—	15,624
1847	2,508	7,889	3,105*	2,285†	15,787
	11,024	41,741	20,893	2,285	75,943

* The number under this head represent the arrivals in the 1st, 2nd, and 4th quarters of 1847. The return for the 3rd quarter has not been received.

† These are for the three first quarters of 1847.

Into the Mauritius since 1843, 70,000 labourers had been imported, and yet both Trinidad and Mauritius were involved in commercial difficulties. The want of labour was not the cause of their misfortunes, and they must look for some other. If he were asked for that cause in the Mauritius, he found it stated in evidence of great respectability that speculation for years had been entertained beyond the means of those engaged in it; then came the commercial depression of 1847, and that put an end to those speculations, and brought ruin on the speculators. Before he sat down, he desired to say one word on a remarkable omission in the report made by the Sugar and Coffee Planting Committee. There was no evidence bearing upon the interests of the consumers in this country. The name of the consumer was not mentioned throughout the evidence. He had not to that hour during the debate heard a word of the interests of the consumers. He had heard of nothing but the interests of certain parties in the West Indies, and not a thought had been cast on the state of the labouring population in this country. Now, the fact was, that the state of England was not such that we could put a high price on an article like sugar, which was so extensively consumed, to support the cultivation of estates in the West Indies upon the present system; and they were bound to consider the interests of the labouring population. With regard to another point, he must say one word to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford, if he would allow him to address him. He understood the right hon. Gentleman to have expressed considerable indignation because reference had not been made to that great question of the slave trade, which he supposed to be involved in the diminution of a protecting duty. He (Mr. Hawes) did not know how long his right hon. Friend had been acting with those who might be considered the abolition party; but he had the honour to act with his friend Dr. Lushington and others, and he would take the liberty to say, the doctrine of the elder abolitionists was, that free labour was cheaper than slave labour, and if they wished to put down slavery, their only chance was to give every encouragement to free labour; and there was no greater bar to the ultimate triumph of free labour over slave labour than anything approaching monopoly or protection. Such influence was fatal to the development of energy and skill Capital had been wasted under it, and no improvement had taken place. Governor Light had said, that sugar cultivation was nearly in the state it was 100 years ago. They might depend upon it that the only way to put down slavery was to trust to the eternal and just principles of free trade, which would make production secure, and reduce its cost to the lowest practical point; and when that was done, they would find the slave to be the most costly instrument of production. If they were ever to solve the great problem of emancipation, their only chance was to do everything in their power to economise production, and reduce the cost of production. He believed it to be thoroughly in the power of the West Indians to compete with the slave owners, if they really made use of that skill and capital by which alone free labour could be made effective. Upon such principles, and such principles alone, he relied for the ultimate restoration of the prosperity of the West Indies, and of that great class for which we had sacrificed so much—the emancipated negroes.

Lord G. BENTINCK: Sir, if it should be necessary for me to ask for the indulgence of the House for some time, I trust the great importance of the subject with which I have to deal, will be my excuse for asking for that indulgence. But, Sir, I rejoice to think that the comprehensive speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Droitwich has so completely given the history of the evidence that has been taken before that Committee of which I had the honour to be the Chairman—the speech of my hon. Friend was so comprehensive and so perspicuous—that a great part of my "occupation is gone," and I am saved in a great measure from going into many details which my hon. Friend has made so clear to the House. The hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, who has just sat down, has done nothing, and I think has forgotten nothing, since he was a party to the introduction of the Act of 1846, nor since on the last day of the late Parliament in this House he taunted me, and called my attention to the manifest prosperity of the Mauritius, and assured the House and me, in these remarkable words, "that competition was all that was necessary for the benefit of the British Sugar Planting Colonies." It was on the 23rd of July, 1847, that a few minutes before the last Parliament was prorogued, the present Under Secretary for the Colonies said—

> "The noble Lord might rest satisfied that a system of free trade and open competition would be most beneficial for all parties concerned—that it would lead to a greater economy in production, be the means of embarking more capital in the growth and manufacture of sugar, and tend to the general prosperity of the whole population."

And, Sir, now, at a time when he sees the colonies involved in one general state of ruin and devastation, the hon. Gentleman appears to continue to be of the same opinion. As I see the hon. Gentleman has left his place, I will pass on now to another subject, and will proceed to clear the Committee of which I had the honour to be a member, of the charge of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that whilst, by his proposal, the finances of the country would only be endangered to the amount of 240,000*l.* the proposition that was made by the majority of the Committee would have involved a loss, I think the right hon. Gentleman said, of 960,000*l.* The right hon. Gentleman went on to state, that supposing the consumption of sugar to increase as he expected it would increase, by 19,000 or 20,000 tons, he would be a gainer instead of a loser by the proposition he made to the House. Now, Sir, my right hon. Friend has two weights in his possession, one by which he measures the resources of the revenue when the opinion of the majority of the Committee is in question, and another weight by which he weighs the revenue when he is himself concerned. He soon flew away from his first and only supposition, that the consumption of sugar would not be increased beyond what it was in the last year, and he then adopted for himself an increased consumption of 20,000 tons; but he gave no credit to the Committee for the 20,000 tons of increase which, if they will add to his revenue, I am prepared to show would add equally to the revenue under the alteration proposed by the Committee. But my right hon. Friend has totally left out of his account that part of the proposition which involved the loan of 500,000*l.*, and with respect to which such little hope was given by the noble Lord at the head of the Government that it would ever be repaid. The noble Lord said it would be a perpetuity, or something to that effect, on the country at a cost of 20,000*l.* a year, for in order to relieve the colonies from the distress occasioned by the Act of 1846, we are to burden the country with a permanent debt of 500,000*l.* [Lord John Russell: I did not say that.] What difference is it whether you raise it as a loan, or whether you charge it to the revenue of the country? Now, I apprehend that unless there is some great increase created by this reduction in the consumption of rum, the right hon. Gentleman must lose 70,000*l.* by the reduction on that article. And with regard to sugar, how does the matter stand? The right hon. Gentleman, taking his last assumption, that there would be an increase of 20,000 tons in the consumption of sugar, assumes there will be altogether 310,000 tons of sugar consumed; but the right hon. Gentleman does not go into any detail to show how part of his calculations was founded upon the higher and part upon the lower duty; but I will assume, and give the right hon. Gentleman credit for this, that the whole of his revenue will be raised at a higher duty. I do believe that by this new scheme, little or no sugar will come in except under the higher duty of 20*s.*; and, in point of fact, his protection will be a virtual protection, in the first year, of seven shillings. Well, then, but if 310,000 tons of sugar are to be consumed. I think it has been shown before the Committee of which I was the Chairman, that such has been the discouragement to sugar cultivation in the British colonies and East Indies, that in the year which is coming, from the 5th of July next to the 5th July following, you cannot calculate upon being able to obtain more than 225,000 tons of colonial sugar—consequently that of the 310,000 tons, 225,000 tons at the outside would, under the proposition made by the Committee of which I had the honour to be Chairman, be colonial sugar and East India sugar, coming in under the 10*s.* duty, and 85,000 tons would come in under the 20*s.* duty. The effect would be, that the total revenue raised would amount to 3,950,000*l.* Now, what would be the right hon. Gentleman's revenue according to his proposition? The right hon. Gentleman's revenue, after giving him credit for the same amount of slave-grown sugar and foreign sugar at 20*s.* per cwt., and giving him credit for the same amount of colonial sugar, would be about 4,622,500*l.*; namely, 2,922,500*l.* on British sugar, and 1,700,000*l.* on foreign sugar; but from this he must deduct the 70,000*l.* loss upon the rum duties, and 500,000*l.* the amount of the loan for immigration. If this is to be given as a means of relief, not for a hurricane nor for an earthquake, but for a state of things which under this glorious system is likely to continue, it must be charged against the casualties of the year. How will the right hon. Gentleman stand on deducting that loss? His net revenue would be 4,055,000*l.*, so that the difference in the first year would be no more than 105,000*l.* between the proposition made by the Committee and the proposal of Her Majesty's Government. Now, I ask, is the right hon. Gentleman, whenever he gets into a difficulty, to borrow a large sum of money and make posterity pay for it? I grant him he will have a larger revenue at his disposal next year; but you cannot go on in times of peace—you cannot go on after a thirty-three years' peace perpetually borrowing without any intention of repaying. Well, then, but the revenue of the right hon. Gentleman falls from year to year—though it is true that in the second year his loss in the revenue would be less than the loss of the revenue under the recommendation of the Committee, taking the six years together, and that is a fair criterion. Take the six years together, the 10*s*. duty on colonial sugar and the 20*s*. upon foreign sugar, and then you will see that the balance will not be with the right hon. Gentleman, but with the plan of the Committee who made their recommendation to the House. Sir, I will assume for argument's sake that the right hon. Gentleman is right in his prognostications, and that there will be an increase of 20,000 tons consumption this year—which I believe there is good reason to suppose will occur—but I must remind the House that in making that assumption I am putting the case in the worst shape I can for the Committee and myself; and I will assume that there will be no further increase in the consumption during the remainder of the period of six years, and then I find that the revenue of the right hon. Gentleman will be, in 1848–9, 4,055,000*l*.; in 1849–50, when there is no deduction in the way of an immigration loan, 4,202,500*l*. In 1850–1, it will begin to dwindle to 3,840,000*l*.; in 1851–2, it will be 3,497,500*l*.; in 1852–3, 3,412,500*l*.; and in 1853–4, 3,355,000*l*., against 3,950,000*l*. in each year under the recommendation of the Committee. Then what is the result? The result would be, that according to the plan of the right hon. Gentleman, the receipts in the six years would be 22,361,500*l*.; while with the 10*s*. duty on colonial sugar, and 20*s*. duty on foreign sugar, the receipts for the same period would be 23,700,000*l*.: showing that upon the whole period of six years, which is the only fair way of trying the two propositions, there would be a balance of 1,338,500*l*. in favour of the recommendation of the Committee. But there is another view to be taken of the subject—but before I proceed further, I must take leave to say that the right hon. Gentleman has already abandoned one of the proposals made in his original statement, which was to withdraw from breweries the permission to use sugar. The original proposition was, that there should no longer be permission given to use sugar in breweries; bnt we have heard from another hon. Gentleman, not a Cabinet Minister, but connected with the Government, and whom we all believe to be the real mover and leader on this question, that till the duty on foreign sugar fell to 12*s*., permission would be given to use sugar in breweries.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Will the noble Lord allow me to state how the matter stands? The case is simply this: As soon as the duty on sugar is 12*s*. 2*d*. per cwt., then one of two things must be done—either an excise duty must be put on the sugar used in breweries, to render it equal to the duty on malt, or the use of sugar must be prohibited in breweries.

LORD G. BENTINCK: Well, as it appears from the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman, that the reduction is not to take place until the year 1853–54, there is no necessity to discuss the question now; but otherwise, I believe, there would be no difficulty in still continuing the permission to have sugar used in breweries. Now, Sir, I come to the end of the period; and I will take the supposition that there would be that increase in the consumption of sugar consequent on the reduction of duty which has been foretold in that paper edited by a Member of the Government, and may be looked on as their official *Moniteur*—namely, that 400,000 tons of sugar will be consumed in the year 1853–54. On the expiration of the fallen duty of the Government at the end of six years, when the duties come to be equalised, what will be the revenue raised from sugar by the right hon. Gentleman? Why, the revenue raised at 10*s*. per cwt. will be 4,000,000*l*. sterling on sugar; and what will be the amount raised under the recommendation made by the Committee? Why, unless there is an increase in the cultivation of the colonies, which is past all hope, unless the colonies at the end of six years again become renovated, and produce and send to this country, together with the produce of India, 290,000 tons and upwards, there will be no other resource but to consume 110,000 tons of foreign sugar; and the consequence will be, that whilst the foreign sugar, under the proposition of the Committee, amounts to 2,200,000*l*., there will be levied on colonial sugar 2,350,000*l*. There will be levied under the recommendation of the Committee 5,100,000., against 4,000,000*l*. under the proposal of the Government; consequently under this proposal, which is said to be reckless, at the end of six years we shall have lost less by 1,328,500*l*. than under the proposition of the Government; whilst in the year following and every year after there would be received 1,100,000*l*. more under the proposition of the Committee than under that which Her Majesty's Minister has reported to the House. Now, Sir, I think I have disposed of the question of reckless recommendation on the part of the Committee, as compared with that proposed by the Minister; but when the Government proposes a diminution of 1*s*. per cwt., it is unreasonable to suppose that such an imperceptible reduction in price will give rise to increased consumption. The proposal of the Committee, however, was to reduce the duty on sugar one halfpenny per lb. That is a large reduction; and though a portion of it was expected to go to the colonial planter, a considerable part of the revenue would be raised out of the diminished profits of the slaveholder. No greater proof of this could be found than in the circumstance that, during the sitting of the Committee, when it was thought that the recommendation of the Committee would be a 10*s*. duty on colonial sugar, whilst the duty on foreign sugar was maintained at 20*s*., the sugar of the colonies went up 1*s*. 6*d*. to 2*s*. per cwt., and foreign sugar came down 1*s*. 6*d*. per cwt. This clearly shows that the effect of the relief to the West Indies would be screwed out of the pockets of the slaveholder. And I think, Sir, that there is no man who has a hatred of slavery in his heart, or who entertains a particle of sympathy for the colonies, who would delight in the idea that such relief was obtained at the expense of the foreign slaveholder. The hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies, who has spoken this evening, says that there is one remarkable circumstance in this debate, and one remarkable circumstance in the report of the Committee, that no notice was taken, and not one word was said about the poor consumer. Why, Sir, our recommendation was the recommendation of cheap sugar. We it was who wished to reduce the price of sugar, and to ensure a continuance of it by competition with the foreigner. Why, Sir, in one of the resolutions, which was passed with the approbation of the Committee, it was admitted that one of the consequences of the measure was that the foreigner was to partake in the increased price of sugar. [Mr. MOFFATT: Of all sugar?] Yes; the hon Gentleman well remarks that the consequence of all free-trade measures is to raise the price of the foreign production, and to enhance the profits of the foreigner. In this case the slaveowner would receive a large proportion of profit. Well, Sir, I have already ventured to say that no man in favour of the emancipation of the slaves in the British colonies can approve of any proposition, the operation of which is avowed to be to increase the profits of those who deal in that infernal traffic. Seeing the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies in his place, I cannot refrain from reverting very briefly to one of his arguments, in which he spoke of the condition of the Mauritius. The hon. Gentleman strove hard to prove that the Act of 1846 had nothing to do with the ruin of the Mauritius, and he read a statement showing how much distressed the colony was in that year. I think I will be able to show that the hon. Gentleman's argument was an erroneous one, and in order to do so, the first witness I will call against the truth of his statement is the hon. Gentleman himself. The hon. Gentleman said in July last, when alluding to some observations of mine, that if the noble Lord turned to the Mauritius, he would find that there the greatest prosperity was manifest. What will the hon. Gentleman say of his own truthfulness when he holds such language in July, 1847, and in June, 1848, he endeavours to persuade the House of Commons that the colony was ruined in 1846? But I will call another witness against him. I will call Sir William Gomm, the Governor of the Mauritius, and we will hear what he says. The passage is this:—

> "Did not Sir William Gomm make some estimate of the value of the crop?—He did; that is the crop which I speak of which has arrived and been sold. Sir William Gomm writes from the Mauritius on the 6th of March, 1847:—'The balance of revenue over expenditure of 1845 was 16,816*l*.; that of 1846 has increased to 50,598*l*.' 'The gross value of colonial exports within the year exceeds that of its imports by no less a sum than 479,415*l*., by the official return; the former,' that is colonial exports, 'amounted to 1,622,425*l*.; the latter,' its imports, 'to 1,143,080*l*., forming a striking contrast to the relative amount of these two valuations in the five years immediately preceding.' I should wish to explain a discrepancy which, unfortunately for the realisation of his figures, Sir William Gomm has fallen into in the estimate. He estimates the value of the crop in the Mauritius at 26*l*. per ton upon 65,000 tons; that crop has realised here about 16*l*. or 17*l*.; the deduction, therefore, will be somewhere about 600,000*l*. or 700,000*l*. from this beatiful report of his. He concludes that because the valuation there is 25*l*., or 26*l*. or 27*l*. per ton, he may take it for granted that the colony must be in a very flourishing position, and that its exports exceed its imports by about 500,000*l*. sterling; whereas the result will be about 500,000*l*. the other way."

What can now be said? Nothing, but that these facts prove a vast mismanagement of our colonies. What I say is, and what others must say is, that the Act of 1846 has done it all. In the year 1842, there was no colony more prosperous than the Mauritius; but with 49,000 tons of slave-grown sugar, you overstocked the market, and eventually the Mauritius broke down under a pressure of 110,000 tons. With these facts, used by the hon. Gentleman in the present debate, every one must feel that he gave the lie to his own previous statements. Could any thing be a more complete answer to the speech of the hon. Gentleman than the words that he used on the previous occasion when he said, "Look how prosperous the Mauritius is,"—and see how completely ruined that colony is at present? I now come to the report of the Committee, and I will say that if it is to be arraigned for any great omission, it is not for having made no mention of the consumer in this country. It certainly cannot be denied that they studied his interests in the main; if they are to be charged with any omission, it is for having left out of view that important part of our empire—the East Indies. But I want to know whose fault that is? I have no difficulty in saying that it is the fault of the Ministers. Did the hon. Member for Westbury make any mention of the East Indies? From the resolutions which were moved on the subject, the East Indies and Ceylon seem to have been wholly blotted out. With regard to the remaining topics connected with this subject which I feel myself called upon to notice, I may as well say at once that I shall not attempt to go into any details respecting the production of sugar; it is impossible properly to argue a question of this kind by a reference to minute details; I think, on the contrary, I shall much better illustrate or elucidate such a question, by taking leave to call the attention of the House to those broad facts upon which alone we can rely for any safe assistance. By a return moved for by the hon. Gentleman himself, we find the average price, up to the year 1845 inclusive, was in the Brazils 18*s*. 6*d*.; but, at the same time, the average price of sugar in bond from Cuba had advanced in value 6*l*. a ton, and muscovado averaged during the six years antecedent to 1845 somewhere about 21*s*. But now, or rather from that time forward, the interest of the sugar planter, which has been represented as so flourishing, was utterly destroyed and demolished. From Cuba the exports, which had been 80,000 tons, advanced to as much as 240,000. That was the amount last year. I repeat that there is no use in small details. These are broad facts which no one can resist. The price of this sugar being at 21*s*., and, at the same time, when we see that the quantity imported from Cuba has increased fourfold, and when we see likewise that the British planters are ruined, can it be required that I should go into minute details? It has been stated in the report, that East India sugar cannot be grown under 23*s*. or 24*s*., while that produced in the Mauritius is of the value of 20*s*. 8*d*., and that in the West Indies at 20*s*. 11*d*. That would leave no interest for capital invested in the trade at the Mauritius. It is clear, then, that that colony cannot flourish under a price less than 28*s*. or 30*s*. per cwt. This is evident from the statement of our free-trade Governor in Jamaica. The hon. Member who spoke last evening, the hon. Member for Westbury, endeavoured to show to the House that the West Indies were not in a distressed state—whereas it is alleged by us, and set forth in the statements of the witnesses before the Committee, that those colonies suffer extreme distress—and he referred to my report for proof of the fact. I beg the House to attend to the ground upon which the hon. Member for Westbury did me this justice; I founded my facts upon the best evidence, that of Mr. Greene, a gentleman largely connected with West Indian property. The hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies went into a long history of the many complaints which, he said, had been made at various times by the British colonists; in 1804, in 1811, in 1830, in 1843, and 1844, he said they had represented themselves as in great distress, and as being ruined; and he asked whether we were to attend to the complaints of colonists who are so often in the habit of crying "wolf?" Why, Sir, I do not think that there is any great interest in this country which has not constantly complained of being in a state of ruin. If we were never to listen to the complaints or investigate any allegation of distress by a particular class, because, at some time or other, that same class has complained without ground, there would be many cases of real grievance which would not be attended to. There are facts, not allegations which rest upon the opinions of planters, but facts substantiated by the evidence of Mr. Marshall, who, I believe, was the secretary to the hon. Member for Montrose, and who received a reward for his services by a grant of this House. And what is Mr. Marshall's view of the condition of the West Indies?

He states that in 1814 we imported into this country from the West Indies, sugar amounting in value to 12,484,714*l.*; that, in 1830, 32,000,000*l.* of war taxes had been reduced, which pressed upon this country; but none of the war taxes, amounting to upwards of 7,000,000*l.* a year, which pressed upon those colonies, had been removed; that, from various causes, the value of colonial produce fell; in 1827, the amount of imported sugar fell to 9,428,209*l.* the taxation remaining the same; in 1828, it fell to 8,907,756*l.*; and in 1829, to 8,212,593*l.*: whilst the war taxes, about seven millions sterling, remained the same, the value of the produce of sugar had fallen from twelve millions to eight millions. Is it a matter of surprise that, under these circumstances, there should be complaints of distress? In 1830, the value of the whole produce imported from the West Indies was only 6,758,084*l.*, of which only 4,890,786*l.* consisted of sugar. Now, let us try the question, not in detail but in gross. What was the cost of production, and what the value of the produce? In 1814 the whole value of the sugar alone was, as I before stated, 12,484,714*l.*, and the total cost of making it was 2,914,140*l.* In 1830 the value of the produce was 4,890,786*l.*, and the cost of making was 1,369,617*l.* But when we come to the first year after your Act of 1846 had come into full effect, what is the result? In the year 1847 the cost of making the colonial sugar was raised to 3,390,086*l.*, and the value of all the sugar imported (not sold) was only 4,336,930*l.* Then you have the total cost of production in 1847 exceeding that of 1814 by 470,000*l.*, whilst the value of the produce was less than one-third. The hon. Member for Westbury has challenged the statement in my report, where I say that the British West Indian planters were 982,662*l.* out of pocket in 1847 by the year's transactions; and he said that I ought to have taken into the calculation the 30,000 tons unsold. I certainly do not mean to dispute that some value is to be attached to that; but if I had calculated the sugar unsold, I think I should have made a great mistake. Gentlemen on the other side can sit in their offices and manufacture sugar in theory at a very cheap rate; but they are very bad traders who would reckon the stock in hand in such a manner as to calculate it as money actually realised. Why, we all know the difference between bills dishonoured and doubtful. The 30,427 tons of sugar remaining unsold was unsold because your slave-grown sugar, under the Act of 1846, drove it out of the market, and the effect was this, that the absolute loss, at the rate which the sugar in that year realised, would amount to 290,569*l.*—a dead loss. The estimated value of the British West Indies —of the capital there—was reckoned to be 130,000,000*l.*; and, excluding the Mauritius and the Cape of Good Hope, the value of the slaves in 1833 was reckoned at 40,000,000*l.* sterling. No value was allowed for houses, or plant, or stock; and the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies comes down to the House, and tells the House that the West Indians are not in such a distressed state—that they have been frequently in an equally distressed state before—and that we need only persevere in free-trade principles in order to get them out of their difficulties. Why, what ought to be the return? No interest is allowed upon the capital; instead of a loss of 290,000*l.* there ought to be 2,000,000*l.* sterling profit to pay the interest upon capital. Every man, be he planter or farmer, or millowner, is entitled to a profit upon the investment of his capital; and the colonists demanded to be put in a position to enable them to obtain such a profit. I am not going to argue this question upon free-trade or upon protectionist grounds. It is not necessary to do so, because there are peculiar circumstances belonging to this case. But this I say, when you took from the West Indians their slaves, you did so upon the specific understanding that they were to be protected against slave-grown produce. Talk of apathy—talk of wastefulness—talk of improvidence, of want of enterprise and energy! Why, so long as the West Indian planter had the same means of producing sugar as Cuba and Brazil possessed; so long as he was permitted to retain his slaves, although it was a mitigated form of slavery—although you limited the hours of work—although you gave the slave twenty-six holidays in the course of a year—although you forbad your colonist to trade in slaves—still by his energy, his enterprise, which certainly have not diminished since 1834—by his energy and his better cultivation, he kept all the slave-traders and slaveowners at bay, and beat them in all the markets of the world. When you talk of the protection they enjoyed from the year 1834, when you emancipated the slaves, that protection was merely a nominal protection, for it never came into play. Under that protection, however, they flourished, and grew more sugar than you could consume. Why, Cuba has been in the possession of slaveholders and sugar cultivators as long as Jamaica has been a British possession; and up to 1831, as I before mentioned, Cuba never produced more than 81,000 tons. It was not until you crushed the West Indies in 1834 that Cuba was able to creep into the European markets, and then it was by reason of the advantage of her slaves, and not by reason of her superior energy and enterprise. Then I say that if you deprive the West Indies of the machinery by which they are alone able to make sugar as cheap as those who possess slaves, you are under a sacred obligation to protect them against wrong. Your conduct to them is worse than that of the Egyptian slave masters—you set them to make bricks without straw, and when they are unable to complete the task, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the noble Lord in the other House, and the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies, say to them, "Ye are idle, ye are idle." Why, the British colonists had better by half have Pharaoh for their ruler, and Egyptians for taskmasters, than Gentlemen sitting on the Treasury benches. But Her Majesty's Government have discovered a great boon to the colonists in the half million of money they are going to grant out of the pockets of the people of this country for immigration, to be carried on under the auspices of Her Majesty's Government. But I shall be able to show, from the despatches of Lord Harris and Governor Light, the sort of plight in which these liberated Africans arrive at the colonies; and I am able to tell a tale, too, by the last packet from Trinidad, of the cost at which Her Majesty's Government are carrying on this immigration, and then the colonists will be able to judge for themselves; and this country will be able to judge, too, of the real value of this immigration, carried on under the auspices of the Government. I will first read an extract from a despatch from Governor Lord Harris—one of those despatches which the hon. Gentleman opposite forgot to lay before the Committee. [*Cheers, and a laugh.*] The hon. Gentleman will not laugh when I read it. The despatch is dated March 8; and Lord Harris says—

> "From all that I have witnessed, and from the statements which I have received, my original opinion that a strict Government surveillance should be kept up has been strongly confirmed; and I have been led also to doubt whether it be possible that immigration can be advantageously carried on as a public enterprise at the general expense. * * * But, if private individuals are permitted to provide immigrants for themselves at their own risk and expense, there is a certainty that the attempt will be made only by men of some capital who possess the means of supporting and paying them, whose interest it will be to take the very best care of them, and whose employment of a number of labourers is likely to prove of benefit to the community generally."

So here you have the opinion of Lord Harris, that immigration cannot be successful if carried on at the public expense, but can only be resorted to with advantage by private enterprise. I thought I also had at hand the opinion of Governor Light on the subject, but I find I have mislaid it; but it is to the same effect as that which I have just read. Lord Harris and Governor Light also report as to the condition in which these African emigrants are brought from the coast of Africa. I find it stated in one of these reports, the mortality amongst those African emigrants was something like 10 per cent; and the remainder arrived in the most emaciated and debilitated and loathsome state. I now come to the question of expense, according to a statement which I have already said had been received by the last paket from Trinidad; and I acknowledge, when I consider it, I am not surprised that the Under Secretary for the Colonies has not given us some information as to the probable expense of immigration from Sierra Leone under the charge of the Government. I have an account here of the result of the voyage of one of the ships which was chartered by the Government—I allude to the *Bangalore*—for the conveyance of emigrants from the coasts of Africa to Trinidad. The House is not perhaps aware that ships so employed are taken at the charge of, I think, 7*l.* a head for the conveyance of emigrants from the coast of Africa; and if they do not take a certain number of emigrants—that is, a sufficient number to pay the expenses—the Government guarantees the payment of a sufficient sum to defray the expense of the stores and other charges; and, in addition, the Government has to provide a storekeeper and surgeon, on board of each ship, at the public expense. The *Bangalore* was chartered to carry 236 emigrants or emancipated negroes from Sierra Leone to Trinidad. ["Oh!"] I do not wish to weary the House, but I can assure them that it is a matter of considerable interest. The ship arrived in due course on the coast of Africa, and having been certified by the proper officers there, she waited a certain time at Sierra Leone to obtain emigrants, and then she proceeded to various other places on the coast for that purpose; but the proper time having arrived, the ship, according to her charter articles, was bound to sail from the coast of Africa to her destination; and here I have a copy of the certificate of the arrival of the barque *Bangalore* at Trinidad with one liberated African on board as an emigrant. Now, this is one of the great steps of the Colonial Government to confer a great boon on the colonies, and the House is now asked to advance half a million sterling to carry on this system of emigration. This is one of the first instances in which a ship was engaged for this purpose of African emigration, and the owners of it received 700*l*. profit, and the surgeon and storekeeper were engaged at the expense of the Government; and all the advantage that was obtained was one liberated negro, who is to aid the island of Trinidad by his labour. Such is the conduct of a Government which complains of the colonists in the Mauritius and the West Indies—which says that they are not able to manage their own affairs, but are in want of the stimulus of being urged on by Earl Grey and Mr. Hawes of the Colonial Office. Thus, then, only one African emigrant was conveyed to the West Indies at the cost of 700*l*.—a charge which would convey the Governor General and all his suite to India. If such is the charge for one single liberated negro, the emigration of which class is to lift up your colonies from their degradation, I believe the half-million at this rate will give them 614 of those liberated negroes. But, Sir, the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies came here and said the people of England must know the truth; and I will take care to tell them the truth. What I complain of in the name of the colonies, and which I must tell the hon. Gentleman this country is indignant at, is, that the Colonial Office have not told the truth, but the truth has been held back; and I believe this is the first time in the history of this country, that the truth has been so suppressed by those to whom this House has intrusted the whole of the colonies, and to whom this House has delegated powers which it alone could give them. I know the hon. Gentleman made an explanation the other night as to the unfortunate accident which happened to interrupt the despatch of Governor Sir Charles Grey of Jamaica. I acknowledge I did not hear that statement, but I have read a description of what took place, and I have also read the evidence given by the hon. Member before the Committee, and which was corrected by the hon. Gentleman himself. The hon. Gentleman the other night was understood to have stated that it was the intention of Earl Grey and himself that this despatch should be immediately communicated to the Committee. The hon. Member proceeded to say, according to the report in my hand—

"The despatch arrived on the 27th of March. On the 27th of March, he (Mr. Hawes) could state that it reached his hands with a minute, which was to the effect that 'this is a copy of the despatch for which the Committee on West India Distress have asked.' We had a copy of the document which was required in the Votes of the House of Assembly. It was to be sent to the Committee this day."

Now, mark what follows, for it is most important. The hon. Member then proceeded with his statement:—

"Would it not be better to send instead a copy of this despatch, which is important, with the report and evidence, which we have got now for the first time? There are two copies, and so it is desirable to send it to-day."

[Mr. Hawes: The two copies alluded to were of the report, and not of the letter.] I understand it to be the report. The statement of the hon. Member then went on as follows:—

"That reached his hands from the Secretary of State with the words, 'I agree with you that this despatch ought to be given at the same time as the report and evidence to which it refers.' He (Mr. Hawes) added, 'I agree;' and on the 30th of March his noble Friend made a minute to this effect—'This may be laid before the Committee, as suggested.' As the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn stated that the despatch had not been laid before the Committee, he (Mr. Hawes) had thought it necessary to make inquiry on the subject, to show that it was the intention of his noble Friend (Earl Grey) and himself that it should be communicated."

[Lord J. Russell and Mr. Hawes: Hear, hear!] I wish to know whether the hon. Gentleman denies the correctness of this report? If the House will listen, it will see whether I am incorrect in my description of the Colonial Office, notwithstanding the equivocal cheers of the hon. Gentleman and the noble Lord. The report in the paper then proceeds:—

"He (Mr. Hawes) was told on the 28th of

March, that the enclosure of the despatch, containing the report of the evidence taken by the Legislature of Jamaica had been sent to the Committee."

The communication enclosed consisted of eighty-two pages, and was signed "B. Hawes;" and the hon. Gentleman had the conclusion of the despatch before him. The report then went on to say—

> "The despatch required some attention to have his noble Friend's intention carried into effect. When it was returned to the department, they omitted to act upon his instructions. It must be said in their defence that the mass of papers and pressure of business offered some apology for the omission; but what he was most anxious to state was, that here was a most decided intention manifested on the part of his noble Friend (Earl Grey) and himself, to have that despatch communicated to the Committee. He thought that the House would be satisfied that he had set that point at rest."

I now proceed to refer to the evidence. I do not see the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Goulburn) in his place; but I see other Members present who will have a perfect recollection of the examination of the hon. Member (Mr. Hawes) on this subject. I shall take the liberty to read again the questions asked and the answers given with respect to a despatch respecting which it appeared in the minute that it was regarded as of great importance. Mr. Goulburn put the following question to the hon. Gentleman:—

> "Can you explain the reason why we have no accounts in the papers laid before Parliament, for Jamaica, of the character of those from other colonies?"

[*Cries of* "Oh!"] I really do not think that this is a light and trivial matter. I shall, therefore, proceed. The hon. Gentleman replied—

> "I imagine you allude to the blue book, to the annual account from Jamaica."

Neither Mr. Goulburn nor any one else had previously uttered one word about the blue book; but Mr. Goulburn proceeded—

> "There is no account of the state of the island, as in the other cases?"

The hon. Gentleman endeavoured to slip out of the difficulty by saying—

> "That is generally comprised in the annual report called the blue book. The fact is that we have not received it."

But Mr. Goulburn has too deep an interest in Jamaica to be satisfied with such an answer; and he proceeded to ask—

> "Does not the Governor write despatches to the Colonial Office on the subject of the state of the island, besides that one particular paper in the course of the year?"

The hon. Gentleman answered—

> "Yes, certainly; but I am not aware of any despatches from him of any importance, which have been withheld from this Committee."

If the minute has not been written since the time the hon. Gentleman gave his evidence, what is the state of the memory of the hon. Gentleman? On the 27th of March, this was described by the hon. Gentleman as a very important despatch, and was regarded as being more important than the report and evidence; but on the 5th of April, within nine days of writing this, the hon. Gentleman said he knew of no despatch of importance which had not been laid before the Committee. [Mr. Labouchere: Read on.] I will read on presently, and I will show, by reading on, that he has held up the Governor of Jamaica to the indignation of the people of Jamaica for keeping back from Parliament and from the Committee the real state of the colony. I will read on, and the hon. Gentleman won't have much cause to plume himself on the result. Mr. Goulburn said—

> "We have received very considerable details as to the state of these colonies, and as to the prospects of agriculture; but from Jamaica I can find nothing of the kind."

The hon. Gentleman's answer was—

> "Until very recently I think there has been no such general despatch received—that despatch is now printing for this Committee; I ought to add that the Governor has been in the island a very short time."

So that the reason for the Government having received no despatches of any importance with respect to the condition of the island and the prospects of agriculture, is laid upon the Governor; and the excuse made for him is, that he has been in the colony only for a short time. But, Sir, there was no doubt left upon the meaning of the hon. Gentleman, for the Chairman says, "That is preparing, is it?" To which the hon. Gentleman replies—

> "There is a despatch, but still not of the nature to which the right hon. Gentleman alludes; however, whatever we have will be furnished."

Now, there is not a single word in all that important despatch, except what related to agriculture. The despatch itself was laid upon the table of the House, and it is not in itself a long one, although there was a delay about getting it printed. Now, the report was readily printed. Every Member of the Committee, I believe, had a copy of the report. The enclosure, too, was printed; I believe I myself received three reports, and we were overburdened with enclosures which filled eighty-two pages. But the despatch itself is one which relates to the report of the House of Assembly, and it is stated in it that the report was inclosed in it, and the report was presented to the Committee. The Governor goes into a long discussion indeed upon the report. The whole despatch is Governor Grey's review of the agriculture of the island, which, mark, would have come in the very nick of time when the Committee was doubting—when two Members of the Committee—the hon. Member for Liverpool and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge—distinctly stated, indeed they were always complaining, that there was no intelligence from Jamaica; but they specially proposed a resolution, in which they professed themselves unable to fix the amount or the duration of the protection that should be required in order to afford relief to the colonies. They opposed the resolution of my hon. Friend the Member for Droitwich. They opposed the resolution of the Chairman, partly on the ground that we took upon ourselves to say what would be necessary, without (amongst other things) having any sufficient information from the principal colony of the West Indies. They were not able to fix their minds as to the exact duration of protection to be afforded. Then what says the Governor of the island? The purpose of my hon. Friend the Member for Droitwich was, that there should be a differential duty of 10*s.* the cwt. on colonial sugar. Now, 9*s.* 4*d.* on the cwt., the House is well aware, is a duty of 1*d.* per lb., and of course 18*s.* 8*d.* is a duty of 2*d.* We proposed a duty of 10*s.* on colonial, and 20*s.* on foreign sugar. Well, now, what writes the Governor of Jamaica?—

> "A permanent *Gazette* price of less than 30*s.* the cwt. for West India muscovado, I firmly believe will cause the greater portion of the sugar cultivation of this island to be abandoned; and if I were to be called upon for a recommendation founded upon the most comprehensive and painstaking review of the whole subject which I am capable of making, it would be, that as far as still more important State affairs will permit, the duties on British muscovado should be brought towards the limit of 1*d.* per pound, and those on foreign to 2*d.*"

Why, Sir, it is the very recommendation that was made in the Committee. Of all most important despatches that could have been laid before us, that was the most important. And then it must be observed that copies of our proceedings, and the evidence taken before us, were laid before the Colonial Office. We sat for eight weeks before we came to any decision; and the noble Lord at the head of the Colonial Department, and the hon. Gentleman, had the opportunity of seeing the printed evidence and the whole of our proceedings from day to day. They must consequently have seen that the despatch was absent, and yet it was never presented to us nor to Parliament until our report was laid before the House. Now I take leave to ask the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade a question. I ask him, with the firmest conviction that he is without guile—that he is incapable of keeping anything back—I ask him, as a Cabinet Minister, whether he had seen that despatch, and knew that it had not been laid before the Committee? [The noble Lord paused a little, and then proceeded.] I get neither assent nor dissent from the right hon. Gentleman. I wish to ask him as a Member representing the Government, whether he was aware that that despatch had been received, and not laid before the Committee? [Mr. LABOUCHERE: I have no objection to answer the question. I certainly had not seen the despatch.] I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman was as ignorant of it as the rest of the Committee. It is impossible that any one should not have observed, that when the circumstance of incorrect returns, made to serve a purpose, in connexion with the department over which he presides, has been brought under the notice of the House, the blush has mantled on his cheek whilst he was offering an excuse and expressing his regret that mistakes had been made. Now, I will make the right hon. Gentleman acquainted with the feeling which the suppression of Governor Grey's despatch has excited in Jamaica. I have received by this day's mail the *Jamaica Despatch* of May 15, and I find in it the following passage:—

> "Whatever may be our opinion of the present Ministry, and incapable as we believe their representative here to be, we cannot bring ourselves to the supposition that any set of men intrusted with the government of the empire would dare to disregard the well-authenticated distresses of any portion of the Queen's subjects. In what light those distresses have been represented by Sir Charles Grey, or what his representations of the condition of the colony may have been, we are unfortunately ignorant. Mr. Labouchere officially declared in the House of Commons that the Government had received no despatches from Jamaica explanatory of its political and social condition.

The matter lies between the two official gentlemen. Either one has grievously misstated, or the other has withheld the only service that could be hoped for from him, namely, a true detail of facts. We have reason to know that steps have been taken to know where the fault lies; and we have already expressed our belief that important despatches were purposely kept by Government. What those despatches may be the future alone can disclose."

After some further remarks the article concludes in the following manner:—

> "We have but one word to add to these most unwelcome truths. The worst enemy the country can have is the man who attempts at the present moment to misrepresent the condition of the colony, or to conceal the alarming state of depression to which the unfeeling policy of the British Government has reduced it."

Thus, it appears, that this is no longer a question between the Under Secretary for the Colonies and the Committee, or even between the hon. Member and the House; but it had become a question affecting the character of the Governor of one of our colonies. Imputations are cast upon Governor Grey, in consequence of the keeping back of this important document, by accident, as we are told. The evidence given by the hon. Member before the Committee is, certainly, of a most extraordinary nature. Since the days of green bags and of Theodore Majocchi, of *non mi ricordo* notoriety, there has never been such an example of forgetfulness as that exhibited by the Under Secretary for the Colonies. We examined, cross-examined, and re-examined him on the subject of these despatches, but all in vain: he was totally unable to recollect that he had received any despatch at all relating to agricultural matters in Jamaica, or that was at all important, although it now appears that there was a correspondence going on between him below stairs and the Secretary of State on the first floor in the same building, respecting Sir C. Grey's despatch, and that two or three different minutes of its importance were made. I could be reconciled to the belief that this omission was accidental if there had not been other important despatches held back at the same time: while the enclosure of the despatch, which answered the purpose, and conformed to the policy of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, was brought forward to the Committee, the despatch itself was not presented to them. The document to which I allude is a paper from Stipendiary Strutt. The Committee met on the 4th of May, and on that day we were greeted with the presentation of a report from Mr. Stipendiary Strutt, which came enclosed in a despatch from Governor Light. The Committee never saw that despatch. They got what the Colonial Office held to be the kernel of the matter, but the husk was cast aside. The despatch which covered it contained information which those who take the part of the West Indians would have thought of considerable value. But Mr. Stipendiary Strutt holds the character of the planters very cheap; he sees nothing but apathy in them, and thinks they have no need of relief. The despatch only arrived on April 24; but the enclosure was placed before the Committee in haste before they came to any decision. The report stated as follows:—

> "At plantation 'Friends' the method of manufacturing sugar, by what is called Bradbury and Evans's patent, continues in operation with the most satisfactory results. The produce of this estate realised in England, so lately as October last, over 20*l.* per hogshead, when sugar of the neighbouring plantations, of the same weight, brought only 10*l.* per hogshead; thus the crop of 500 hogsheads, made by the 'Friends' equals in value 1,000 hogsheads made by other plantations."

Now, I may say in passing, that we had before the Committee, the evidence of Mr. Dunnett, a planter in Barbadoes, who was also so taken with this patent, that though a gentleman of fortune, he put on a workman's jacket, and studied the method of working it in London, and thinking great things were to be done by it, he went out to Barbadoes to try the experiment there; but, unfortunately, it entirely failed. Mr. Strutt goes on to say—

> "I am at a loss to know why machinery of this kind, or, what is stated to be as good, the vacuum pan process, is not adopted generally. It may be said that some proprietors are too poor to make the outlay of money which the machinery costs (from 1,000*l.* to 2,000*l.*). Admitted; but all proprietors are not so circumstanced; many proprietors have the means, and I could name them; but they have, what they should have, especially in times like the present, apathy! If this country is to be continued as a sugar-producing country, the quality of the produce must be improved; there must be less inertness on the part of the proprietors, and more activity; and instead of such frequent appeals to the Government for relief, there should be more frequent consultations with agricultural chemists, and with practical engineers. It is a melancholy and a disgraceful fact, that with the solitary exception of plantation 'Friends,' and in the face of all the scientific improvements of the present century, the method of manufacturing sugar now in Berbice is the same precisely as it was thirty years ago. The agricultural part of the business is understood by parties in charge of estates; fine canes are grown, and abundance of them; but when they are brought to the build-

ings, there is neither skill nor machinery there capable of converting the cane-juice into good sugar. If a tenth part of the money spent in bringing Portuguese and Coolies here had been expended in introducing machinery and sugar boilers, there would not be a tithe of the distress existing here which does exist."

You have heard from my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol (Mr. Miles), how many steam-engines, rollers, and other implements of various kinds have been sent out in the last few years to the West Indies —a pretty good denial to the truth of this statement. All this chimes in charmingly with the notions of the noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonies (Earl Grey), on the 7th of February, and with the ideas of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that they have no objection to hurry to the Committee with a copy of it, before the Committee had come to any decision. But Governor Light's despatch was kept back, which would have given a rather different view of the affairs of the colonies. In a despatch received from him on the 24th of April, Governor Light says—

"The cessation from labour at the present moment is partial. Many of the Creoles have returned to their usual occupation on estates; but while the average of produce throughout the province is 1 or 1¼ hogshead per acre, it will be very difficult to compete with slave sugar. The crop of last year would have been remunerating had the prices kept up; that of Berbice as large as during slavery, but little profit has accrued. The difficulty of the planters is now increased by their not being able to raise money even on their sugars. The failures in England have so shaken credit, that good (apparently) bills are refused, for fear of the person on whom they are drawn failing in the interval of their becoming due."

Now, why was this kept back, while Mr. Stipendiary Strutt's report was furnished to us? As every one knows, the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell), the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and some other Members of the Government, have said what was over and over again repeated by the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies, that absenteeism is at the root of all these evils. [Mr. Hawes: I never said so.] Perhaps the hon. Gentleman did not use the word absenteeism; but he said certainly that it was the want of resident proprietors which had caused them, and that is the same thing. That quibble about a word was one of the many fancies of Earl Grey, the head of the Colonial Office. It was absenteeism, he said, which was the cause of all the ruin that had fallen on the colonies. By the same rule as that which had been already acted upon, the despatch from Governor Light, enclosing a letter from several of the sugar proprietors of Berbice, addressed to Earl Grey himself, was withheld. In the letter they say—

"County (late Colony) Berbice, British Guiana,
16th March, 1848.

"My Lord—We have just seen a newspaper containing a synopsis of a speech purporting to have been delivered in the House of Lords by your Lordship, on the 7th of last month, in a debate on a Motion on the state of the West Indies, introduced by Lord Stanley, in which is the following passage: 'But he contended, the system of cultivating and of manufacturing sugar in the West Indies by the intervention of agents (the proprietors residing in England) must be abandoned; and where estates had been cultivated by resident proprietors, they had been profitable.' We take the very first opportunity of stating to your Lordship, that if your Lordship entertains such opinions as are attributed to you in the above paragraph, they are, as far as this portion of the West Indies is concerned, not founded on fact, but on a misapprehension of the real state of things existing in this colony. At the termination of the apprenticeship, there were in cultivation in this country thirty-seven sugar estates, about the same number of coffee estates, and two or three cotton properties. The cotton plantations have been long abandoned; and of the coffee estates four only are in existence, miserable remnants of that once-productive and valuable cultivation; of these four estates, two are in the hands of resident proprietors, the other two are owned by parties in England. Of the thirty-seven sugar estates, five had been abandoned; of these, four belonged to resident proprietors, and only one to an absentee. The remaining thirty-two estates have been kept in cultivation, at an enormous sacrifice of capital, in the expectation that a protection against slave-grown sugar would be continued until a sufficiency of labour could be introduced to enable the proprietors to conduct them with some profit; of these eighteen are in the hands of resident proprietors or lessees; one has just been taken from its resident proprietor, and sold at execution sale; the remaining thirteen belong to absentees, and are managed by agents; and we are not aware that there exists any difference in the condition of these properties; if there be any, it is in favour of estates of absentees, who have had more money to expend on improved machinery, and otherwise, than the resident proprietors; but even in their case, as your Lordship, no doubt, well knows, the result has been so ruinous, that they have resolved to abandon their property rather than throw away another farthing upon it. It therefore appears, that out of thirty-seven sugar estates in Berbice, twenty-three (or about 62 per cent) have been, and are, cultivated by resident proprietors or lessees, and only fourteen (or about 38 per cent) by the agents of absentee proprietors; and we again assert that we are not aware of a single estate cultivated by a resident preprietor which has been profitable."

That despatch had been enclosed to the noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonies, accompanied by another report from Stipendiary Strutt; but the one dispatch which was calculated to create a favourable opinion in the minds of Parliament and of the Committee, is withheld in the Colonial Office, while the despatch that was calculated to injure the colonists is placed before the Committee. I have shown you that when a despatch that served their purpose arrived, there was no difficulty in laying it before the Committee within nine days after its receipt; but here is another despatch from Governor Lord Harris, received on the 5th of May: that, I think, was eight days before I moved for the despatches in this House; it was sixteen days before any resolutions were taken or rejected by the Committee upstairs; and it was eleven days before the Government came down with their own resolutions—so that there was ample time for us to have it, and yet this despatch was also withheld. Lord Harris, writing on the 5th of April, says—

> "In reflecting on the depressed state of affairs in this colony, and on its prospects, which become daily more gloomy, I have endeavoured to discover whether some relief might not be afforded, some alleviation found, whereby the burden which now weighs down the planter might be lightened. It is sad and painful to behold men expecting ruin quickly to overtake them; it is perhaps sadder and more painful to see them struggling and toiling against adversity, but with their energies dulled, and their arms palsied, from the knowledge that their labours must be unremunerative, and that failure can be the sole result; it is most distressing to witness this, and at the same time to be aware that much of the misery from which they are suffering, and that which awaits them, is of a nature which they are unable to avert by any acts of their own. It is pitiable to witness a fine colony daily deteriorating; a land enjoying almost every blessing under heaven, suffering from a shock from which it does not rally; but the deepest pang of all, to an Englishman, is to see the hearts and affections of a whole population becoming gradually alienated from the country which he loves. Suffering from such feelings, I have deemed it my duty to suggest a plan which might afford some temporary relief: which, having been adopted for the benefit of other portions of the empire, might fairly be applied to this; and which, having been proposed for them by Her Majesty's Government, and having received the sanction of Parliament, has all the weight of their authority to support it. Did I not see a prospect, I think a better one than in any other in the West Indies, of getting this colony through the present crisis, I should not venture to propose that advances should be made; but looking to the fertility of its soil, and the almost certainty of favourable seasons, I believe that with assistance, there can be little doubt of its ultimate success. But to be enabled to carry on the cultivation there is an absolute want of money, and there is no probability of any being advanced by capitalists. The question, therefore, is, shall the cultivation be allowed to cease, and the estates to go to ruin? for neglect for a very short time in this climate ensures ruin; or shall such assistance be offered as would enable the cultivation to continue?"

It then goes on to say—

> "I could quote to your Lordship estates, as far as their soil is concerned, of great value, and giving, previously to emancipation, a large income, on which the whole of the redemption money was expended in improvements—which were entirely free from debt at that time—and which are now mortgaged almost to their full value, and their proprietors—resident Creoles too—from being in good circumstances, reduced to the last extremities. In these cases, the want of labour at a fair rate has been the chief cause of their embarrassments; they surely have some claim for assistance from the mother country. I am aware of the difficulties of the Imperial Government; it is furthest from my wish to add to them; and I only offer the subject of a loan for the purposes stated above, as a suggestion which may be feasible, and which would be most acceptable."

But mark this—this is the language that your own Governor holds—this is the language which has been kept back from the Committee:—

> "Moreover, under the present grave circumstances of Europe and the world in general, I would add, that, if the power of England and her interests are to be maintained in this portion of it—and I think they are worth maintaining—it would not be impolitic that some sympathy of a practical nature should be shown, and as early as practicable, by the mother country."

The Governor who has obtained so much of the confidence of the country, and who so much deserves the admiration of this House, writes a despatch of that character; and I ask the hon. Gentleman who is here on behalf of the Colonial Office to answer me why it was that that despatch had been kept back from the Committee appointed to consider whether any measures of relief should be adopted by Parliament for our West India colonies? I shall wait for a satisfactory answer to that question from him or from the noble Lord at the head of the Government. I answer for it that the noble Lord—I answer for it that the right hon. Gentleman who sat on that Committee as the representative of the Government—knew as little of the existence of that despatch as the other Members of the Committee. I answer for it that that right hon. Gentleman was as little aware of these authorities when he supported Mr. Wilson's resolutions and repudiated those of the hon. Member for Droitwich, as the other Members of the Committee. But let me tell the noble Lord at the head of the Government, and the noble Earl at the head of the Colonial Office, this is not the way to govern the colonies of this country—this is not the way to retain their attachment—this is not the way to retain their affections; nor is it the mode to retain the esteem or the attachment of the British public on this side of the Atlantic. Let me tell them that there is nothing calculated to rouse the indignation of the British nation more than when they think they see a packed jury trying any criminal, however atrocious. I complain not of a packed jury upstairs. Men more honourable and more determined to get at the truth never assembled together. But I complain that the witnesses were cooped up—that the evidence was kept back—and that those witnesses who told well for the colonists were spirited away, while the witnesses who could speak against the colonists and their interests were anxiously brought forward. I recommend to the noble Earl at the head of the Colonial Office to pay attention and some regard to the advice of a great Whig statesman of old, who has said with great truth, "A refined policy ever has been the parent of confusion, and ever will be so long as the world endures. Plain honest intention, which may as easily be discovered as fraud will surely be detected at last, is of no mean force in the government of mankind."

LORD J. RUSSELL rose and said: If the House intends to finish the debate to-night, I will certainly proceed to address it; but if the House intends to adjourn the debate, seeing that so many Members are unaware of an intention to divide, I shall not address it. I would rather wish at this late hour not to address the House; but I expected some one would move the adjournment of the debate when the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) sat down. I had in that case resolved to take the opportunity of saying a few words on the attack which the noble Lord has made on my noble Friend the Secretary for the Colonies. Perhaps similar attacks will be made on Monday evening, should the adjournment now be moved; and I shall then take the opportunity of replying to such, should they be brought forward.

MR. G. THOMPSON moved the adjournment of the debate, and

LORD J. RUSSELL again rose. In replying, Sir, as far as I can, to the charges which the noble Lord has brought against my noble Friend the Secretary of the Colonies, you will first permit me to say that there is nothing in the character of my noble Friend — there is nothing either in his public or private life—to justify the noble Lord in bringing forward against him the charge which he has this night preferred. I defy the noble Lord to say that there is anything in the character of my noble Friend—anything he has ever done in his public life—that would justify anybody in casting the slightest stain on his integrity, which is as pure and unquestioned as that of any man who has ever been engaged in the concerns of public life. And upon what is it that the noble Lord founds this imputation? It is on a proceeding that took place in the Colonial Office with regard to a despatch that arrived on the 27th of March. I mean to speak as to that despatch, because there has been time to examine into the circumstances connected with it, and therefore I am in some degree aware of them. I am not aware of every particular circumstance that may occur as to the transaction of business at the Colonial Office; but this I know, that it has been for many years the established practice of that office, that when despatches are received, they first go to the particular department to which they belong—to the West India department if they are West India despatches; that there a minute is made upon them; that they then go to the Under Secretary of State, and afterwards to the Secretary of State. As there arrive great numbers of despatches by every mail, increasing as they are every year, there are very often large boxes and cases of papers which the persons in the different departments of the office have to examine; but that is the usual practice and conduct of the office. It appears that this despatch, according to that practice, was, on the 27th of March, in the hands of one of the clerks of the office, to whom the conduct of the West India business is intrusted; he wrote upon it a minute, that it appeared to him that it was a despatch of importance, and that, in his opinion, it ought to be laid before the Committee. On the same day my hon. Friend assented to that proposal; and on the 30th of March, Earl Grey made a minute that the despatch was to be laid before the Committee. Now that, I can venture to say, from some practice in the Colonial Office, is according to the usual course of the office. There was no discussion—it does not follow in the least that there was any discussion; unless there is any question upon which the Under Secretary wishes to consult the Chief Secretary, that minute is made, and the despatch proceeds according to the direction which is given. If there is an answer to that despatch, a minute is made, in the same way, upon the despatch. The Secretary of State naturally supposed, having given that direction, that the despatch would proceed in the regular manner, be laid before the Committee, and be printed. I do not suppose that Earl Grey would inquire each day as to the printing of the despatch, or in what state it was on a particular day. On the 5th of April, my hon. Friend (Mr. Hawes) was examined before the Committee with respect to certain despatches. Mr. Goulburn asked him the question which the noble Lord has read, and my hon. Friend answered—

> "I imagine you allude to the blue book—to the annual account from Jamaica."

Mr. Goulburn goes on—

> "There is no account of the state of the island, and in the other cases?"

The answer is—

> "That is generally comprised in the annual report called the blue book. The fact is, that we have not received it.
>
> "Does not the Governor write despatches to the Colonial Office on the subject of the state of the island, besides that one particular paper, in the course of the year?—Yes, certainly; but I am not aware of any despatches from him of any importance which have been withheld from the Committee?"

My hon. Friend had had the despatch before him a few days previously; he had given his opinion that it should be sent to the Committee. Lord Grey had confirmed that decision, and my hon. Friend naturally supposed that that despatch was then either laid before the Committee, or was in the course of printing, and would be laid before it. Another question is asked—

> "We have received from other colonies very considerable details as to the state of those colonies, and as to the prospects of agriculture; but from Jamaica I can find nothing of the kind."

The answer is—

> "Until very recently I think there has been no such general despatch received."

Implying very clearly that very recently there had been such a despatch received—

> "That despatch is now printing for this Committee; I ought to add, that the Governor has been in the island a very short time."

That last remark does not apply particularly to the despatch; but my hon. Friend stated in his answer that there was a despatch received, and that it was printing for the Committee. I think, after he had given that information, that there had been a despatch received, which despatch was received on the 27th of March, it was rather for the Committee, and rather for the noble Lord, to ask for that despatch, and ask where it was, than for the Secretary of State to inquire whether or not his order had been obeyed. The noble Lord has gone on to another case, with respect to which I am not informed, but with respect to which I have no doubt that when my hon. Friend shall make the same inquiries he will give an answer which shall be as direct to the imputations the noble Lord has thus made, as the answer which is now given to this imputation. It appears to me that the noble Lord is not in any way justified from the facts that have just been stated, in supposing that my noble Friend wished to conceal or to suppress any despatch, or to withhold it from the Committee. Had it been his wish to withhold or suppress despatches, his object would have been much rather to withhold them from the knowledge of this House, in which the debate was to take place, than from the knowledge of the Committee; but it appears that no sooner had the despatch come to his hands, than he desired that it should be given to the Committee. Now, I must say, generally, with regard to these matters, quite apart from the conduct of my noble Friend, and generally with regard to the conduct of men high in public office, that these mean frauds — these extremely dishonourable tricks—which the noble Lord imputes to them, are not the faults and characteristics of men who are high in public office in this country. They are characteristics of men who are engaged in pursuits which the noble Lord long followed. The noble Lord very greatly distinguished himself in detecting a fraud of that nature with respect to the name or the age of a horse, in which he showed very great quickness of apprehension. But when the noble Lord comes forward and imputes to a man of the character of my noble Friend—when he imputes to a man of the character of Lord Grey fraudulent conduct, with a view of suppressing the truth, with a view of evading the disclosure of the truth—I say he totally misconceives the character of Lord Grey. He totally misconceives the character of any man with whom I have been acquainted—of any party who has been high in office in this country for a long term of years, in throwing out those imputations, utterly unfounded as they are —utterly unfounded as they are, I repeat again, because to charge Lord Grey with anything like fraud—with anything like meanness—is an imputation to which he, of almost all men, is the least liable. I say it is true, generally, that no such charges can safely be preferred. They belong rather to those pursuits in which the noble Lord— And I am satisfied that when the whole of these matters come to be discussed, it will be the general conviction of the world that the noble Lord has done in this instance as he has done in some other instances—one I remember, of a right hon. Gentleman lately the Prime Minister of this country—another occurred within these few days, with respect to a gentleman who holds a subordinate situation in the office of the Board of Trade—I say, that when the noble Lord makes these reckless and unfounded imputations, it will be found that he will not injure the character of those whom he attacks, but he will injure his own character for common justice and honour.

Mr. DISRAELI: Sir, I cannot help thinking that had the noble Lord who has just addressed the House been silent—had he left the debate to terminate as it seemed about to terminate; or, if he had intrusted its future destinies to the volunteer who suddenly rose up to move the adjournment, both the reputation of the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the reputation of the noble Lord would have suffered less. The House can judge whether the noble Lord the Secretary of State has been vindicated with much success. The noble Lord has chosen his own battle-field. The debate might have been adjourned; he might have met the statement of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn—he might have met any statement which had been brought forward evidently with so much consideration, and which was supported, let me remind the House, right or wrong, with so much detail, and with so much testimony—the noble Lord, in the legitimate method, might have taken the opportunity which was offered to him to meet it in the regular course of the debate, and he might have made an answer to the statement of my noble Friend, and he might have confuted him, if it were in his power to confute him. I admire the ardour of a man who cannot be restrained when he feels it is in his power to fulfil a great duty. But then let me remind the House that the condition of such conduct is that the duty shall be fulfilled. Has the noble Lord said anything which ought to influence the opinion of the House upon this subject? The noble Lord commenced his answer by a miserable criticism, and some of the routine of office—namely, that a minute was made upon a despatch, and that that did not imply, as my noble Friend casually seemed to infer, that a discussion had taken place. But what has this to do with the great merits of the case? My noble Friend made a statement that there had been a *suppressio veri* on the part of a high functionary of the country. He produced the cases of the despatches of three Governors of colonies that had been suppressed, those despatches containing most important information on a subject of the greatest interest which had been submitted to a Committee of this House. What is the answer of the noble Lord? He only notices one of the three cases, and he only notices that instance to say he knows nothing about it. It is not decorous, it is not decent in the noble Lord to meet a statement so detailed and so powerful as that made by my noble Friend in such a manner and in such a spirit. What is it to me, what is it to the people of England, that the noble Lord opposite, and the great gentlemen and noblemen with whom he acts, are by his *ipse dixit* incapable of anything that is improper or fraudulent? That may be the opinion of the noble Lord. I, for one, wish it ever to be the opinion of this House and of the country. But that high reputation can only be cherished by meeting charges boldly—by meeting them with counter evidence—and not by attempting to ride over a case like this by appealing to his great position and to the pedigree of his Colleagues, and by asking the House of Commons whether they think it possible that such very great gentlemen and noblemen of such high descent, can be capable of conduct which it has been proved before this House and the country they have pursued. I hardly know, Sir, whether I should deign to notice some of the observations of the noble Lord. How one of his sneers against a noble pastime of this country may be estimated by hon. Gentlemen in this House I stop not to inquire; but this I know from his own admission, that the proceedings of my noble Friend, in the very case to which the noble Lord referred, as on subsequent occasions in this House, proved of good service; and I believe the same determined spirit of honesty, the same indefatigable spirit of investigation, the same courage that will not be cowed by any bravo, whatever may be his position, the same high spirit that will not be bullied either in the ring or in the House of Commons, the same acuteness and the same vigilance may be brought to bear with great effect in an investigation of the manner in which our colonial affairs are carried on. I ask you to remember that that case in private life to which the noble Lord the First Minister of the Crown referred with such excessive taste and such perfect temper, led to this consequence—that some of the gentlemen of England, as great gentlemen as any of the noble Lord's Colleagues, met together to express their gratitude to my noble Friend for his conduct, and to thank him for having vindicated the purity of a pastime which has degenerated with the spirit of the age. And who, Sir, was the chairman of that meeting? His Grace the Duke of Bedford. But, because the Duke of Bedford is a steward of the Jockey Club—because he was the chairman of the meeting which did honour to my noble Friend, and founded that contribution which my noble Friend, unlike other public characters, refused, and handed to that club whose honest feeling he wished to improve, as he wishes to improve the moral tone and honest spirit of the Colonial Office—is the Duke of Bedford on these accounts disqualified for the office of a Privy Councillor? Does the noble Lord the First Minister of the Crown shrink from his Grace of Bedford when any subject of importance, especially respecting the administration of our colonies, is concerned? Does he never condescend to consult that man of great sagacity, experience, and honour? Or, when he meets him, does he say, "Avaunt! I and my Colleagues are men of such high character that we cannot condescend to speak to a man who has been seen at Newmarket?" Sir, the charges made against the Colonial Office are before the country. They must be answered. My noble Friend did not preside over the Committee for four months of unparalleled labour, to allow that such an answer as has been so unnecessarily volunteered to-night is satisfactory. This is the return of the Government to the Chairman of the Committee. But this reminds me that the evidence taken before that Committee was for fifty-six days before the Secretary of State; he was perfectly aware of all the evidence that was given; he was fully cognisant of all those cross-examinations which have so often been referred to to-night. I say, Sir, that these charges are before the country. They have not been lightly made, and they shall not be lightly answered. Is this case to be regarded as if it was the first time that despatches have been treated unsatisfactorily by an Administration? Why, remember the despatches of Sir Alexander Burnes, the most important passages and paragraphs of which were suppressed. But there is a greater question than the conduct of the Colonial Office elicited by the observations of the noble Lord the First Minister of the Crown to-night. The question between the Secretary of State and my noble Friend must be settled, and it can only be settled by the charges being amply met and completely confuted. I leave the greater point to the House of Commons. They must vindicate the freedom of debate, and show—as they have done pretty significantly this evening—that they will not tolerate such conduct as has been exhibited by the noble Lord the First Minister of the Crown.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Mr. Speaker, I certainly do not rise because I think that any defence, either on my part or on that of any other person, is necessary for my noble Friend the First Lord of the Treasury from the attack which has been made upon him. But, Sir, the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord G. Bentinck) thought fit, in the course of the speech he has addressed to the House, to contrast my conduct with that of my noble Friend Lord Grey, and my hon. Friend the Under Secretary for the Colonies (Mr. Hawes), and to state that he believed if I had been placed in the same circumstances in which they have been placed I should not have acted in the same manner. Sir, it is less in justice to my noble and hon. Friends than to my own feelings that I rise to declare that I cannot accept that compliment from the noble Lord. I have acted for many years with my noble and hon. Friends; I know them well in public and private life; and I should be ashamed of myself if I shrank from declaring my conviction that they are as incapable as any men alive of acting in the manner imputed to them by the noble Lord. What, in reality, was the imputation? It is not that in the discharge of his public duty my noble Friend committed any error or mistake. No; the charge was one which ought surely not to be made against any man, much less against any man holding the position, and, I will say, holding, what is much higher, the character of my noble Friend, Lord Grey: it was this, that he wilfully and designedly committed a fraud upon the House of Commons by purposely withholding important evidence in his possession, and that he had since concocted minutes to bear out the statement made in his vindication. Can the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn, then, be surprised that my noble Friend rose with great warmth to repel such a charge? I quite agree with my noble Friend that it is too much the habit of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn to indulge in imputations of this description. I do not—I hope I never shall—complain of any attacks, however severe, on any public men, imputing to them public misconduct of any kind which can justly be charged against them; but what I do say, is, that no man has a right, except on the clearest evidence, to make a charge such as that of wilful fraud against a public servant. This is not the first instance in which the noble Lord has resorted to this course. I have observed it in several other instances. I can state the instance of a Gentleman in my own office, the Secretary of the Board of Trade, Mr. Porter. I won't enter into particulars. Mr. Porter presents a return to the House of Commons, which may or may not be inaccurate. But what does the noble Lord do? He takes for granted that any mistake which may have occurred must have arisen from the very worst motives, and so he brings a charge against a man whom I know to be as honourable a man as any in this House. He thinks himself justified in bringing against that gentleman a charge of wilful perversion of the truth. I will mention another instance—which I know gave great pain to one of the most valuable public servants and one of the most honourable men in this country—I mean the Chairman of the Excise, Mr. John Wood. He was examined before the Committee of which the noble Lord was Chairman. He gave his evidence not only ably, but honestly and uprightly, as every one would expect who knows that gentleman. In the draught report the noble Lord used an expression which I know was very offensive to the feelings of Mr. Wood; and the draught report remains on the minutes of the Committee, though had it been pressed for adoption I should have proposed that the expression should be expunged, and I have no doubt that I should have been supported by the Committee in doing so. The noble Lord had described Mr. John Wood as having "fenced" with the questions put to him. Mr. John Wood came to me with great indignation. I will tell the House the answer I gave him—that if the expression had been used by any Member but the Member for King's Lynn I confess I should have attached considerable importance to it. But it is characteristic of the noble Lord that he always thinks the smallest inaccuracy or error must be imputed to some design of wilfully misrepresenting or perverting the truth. I very deeply regret this disposition on his part. I have seen it very often, and it affects very materially the force of any charge he can bring against any public servant. With respect to the question immediately before the House— [An Hon. MEMBER: Adjournment?] I don't think the hon. Member opposite spoke very particularly to the question of adjournment. I will only say that I do not think the noble Lord has any shadow of foundation for believing that there has been any intention to suppress evidence. The hon. Member who has just addressed the House wished the House to regard as of no importance to the case whether or not there had been any discussion in the Colonial Office on the production of the despatch. But the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn laid great stress on that fact. He said, the notes on this despatch showed that there had been great discussion in the Colonial Office on the subject. I don't think the noble Lord made out the smallest *primâ facie* case. It is too much for the noble Lord to make charges of this description against men of the highest and most indisputable honour which rested on such trumpery grounds.

SIR E. BUXTON: I was a Member of the Committee referred to, and I was present during the examination of Mr. Hawes. It is quite unnecessary for me to go through the details of the evidence upon which this charge is sought to be established. I can of course give only my evidence rather in the character of a juryman than of a witness; but I must say that I believe the charge which the noble Lord has brought forward against the hon. Gentleman to be wholly, entirely, and utterly without foundation. Having voted against the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade through the whole course of this question—having reasons of my own for supporting the West Indian interests—I think it would be most unjustifiable for me to sit quietly by and hear the charge made without at least stating my firm conviction of the innocence of the hon. Gentleman. When I read the charge in the newspaper I was astonished; and I could not bring myself to believe that there was proof of any such charge against the noble Lord or against my noble Friend. I fully agree that it was unfortunate that an error was made; but I fully believe that it was an error, and nothing but an error.

MR. ANSTEY: I rise to notice one point in the defence of the First Minister of the Crown, which seems to have escaped the attention of the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire. The noble Lord seems to rest his defence of the noble Earl that the course taken upon this occasion has been in strict conformity with former precedent. Now, on Tuesday next we shall feel it our duty to show that the complaints from the colonies of neglect and want of attention to their interests depends very much upon this circumstance. We shall feel it our duty to show that the Colonial Office, for seven years confessedly, but as I believe for many more, has been nothing but a sink of corruption and abuse.

MR. HAWES: I cannot allow this discussion to terminate without saying a few words. The noble Lord has twice brought forward charges against me which it was utterly impossible for any one to meet without previous notice. The first charge I met by stating here in my place that no despatches had been withheld from the Committee. The first time the House met afterwards I stated in my place that the despatch of the 27th of March was minuted by one of the gentlemen of the Colonial Office as an important despatch, and as one which ought to be communicated to the Committee. It was also minuted by the Assistant Under Secretary of State to the same effect. I minuted it to the same effect the same day. We all made the same minute on the same day, that that despatch ought to be laid before the Committee; to which my noble Friend the Secretary of State on the 30th added his minute to the same effect. The noble Lord's first shabby imputation I met thus with a distinct explanation. The noble Lord now pursues the same course, bringing a charge against me without notice on Friday night, so that I cannot meet it before Monday. The noble Lord, knowing that it is impossible for me, in respect to charges of this kind, to meet them without documents and dates, again selects Friday night—to fling abroad his calumnies till Monday, and on Monday I will state the truth to this House. But that is not all. The noble Lord has made a charge which I mean to call on him to prove; and which he ought not to have made, unless he is in a condition to prove it. I tell him that that charge is wholly and entirely false. [Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member does not mean to say, I presume, that the noble Lord has knowingly made a false charge?] I simply said to the House that the charge is distinctly false, and the noble Lord best knows himself how far he is liable to the other imputation. What is the charge which the noble Lord made? [*Interruption.*] I suppose I am addressing myself to Gentlemen. And I suppose that when a gross and scandalous imputation is cast on me, I am to be heard by those Gentlemen who heard and cheered the charge. What was that charge? It was, that all these minutes on that despatch, made by a gentleman in the Colonial Office of the highest respectability and honour, and who is known to Gentlemen in this House who have served as Secretary of State in that department, were concocted — that the Assistant Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, that I and my noble Friend (Earl Grey) concocted that minute, and dated it after we apprehended, I suppose, that our fraudulent conduct would be discovered—that we hastily and shamefully— ["No, no!"] Yes, that was the charge—I am not going to let the noble Lord off—that we shamefully, disgracefully, dishonourably concocted — for that was the word — that minute afterwards, in order to enable us to explain it to the House. And is it the conduct of English Gentlemen here to make such charges without notice? [*Interruption.*] I claim the protection of the House from that charge. I ask for that charge to be investigated. [Mr. DISRAELI: That is riding off.] Riding off, indeed! When the noble Lord has made a charge against an humble individual like myself, whose private and public character depends on the truth or groundlessness of it, and when I call on him to prove it, his *Fidus Achates* stand up and says "I am riding off." That is his sense of honour and gentlemanly feeling. I call on the noble Lord to prove that charge. [Mr. DISRAELI: He has not made it.] I am astonished. The noble Lord did or did not say that that minute was concocted. I heard the word. The noble Lord does not now withdraw the word. If he used it, I call on this House, and every Gentleman here, to insist on that charge being investigated and proved. I say that it is absolutely and entirely false. With respect to the other charge which the noble Lord has made, I will take the first opportunity again of inquiring what foundation there is for it—I believe there is none—and I will state the result to the House.

Lord G. BENTINCK: I shall not bandy from one side of the House to the other charges of falsehood; but this is what I say, and charge the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies with, on evidence which I laid before the House in substantiation of the charge. I said that if these minutes and memorandums were not got up subsequently to his examination of the 5th of April, he was troubled with the shortest memory since the days of green-bag notoriety, when Theodore Majocchi gave his answer of *Non mi ricordo*. That was the charge I made; and the hon. Gentleman may take his option whether or not, after these various discussions and various minutes to which he affixed his name, he on the 5th of April could not remember the receipt of any despatch of an important nature—that he could not on the 5th of April recollect, notwithstanding three separate discussions on the subject of that despatch and its importance, that any important despatch, or that any despatch connected with the agriculture and social state of Jamaica, had been received. That is the charge I make against the hon. Gentleman; and I care nothing whether he makes his defence against the one or the other of the horns of the dilemma on which I place him, and from which he cannot escape. And though I will not say "This is false," and though I will not condescend to use the terms the noble Lord opposite has used towards me—though I feel nothing but regret that any one of the name of Russell, and, above all, the brother of the Duke of Bedford, whom I so much esteem and look up to, should have cast such an insinuation as he has done on the merits of this impeachment of a high Minister of State—I am prepared to stand before this House and the country, and to be judged, not by charges of falsehood such as have been made on the other side of the House, but on the facts as they can be maintained or refuted.

Mr. H. BAILLIE: I wish to put a question to the hon. Under Secretary for the Colonies with respect to this celebrated minute. The hon. Gentleman states that the words of the minute are, "that it ought to be referred to the Committee." I wish to ask whether the words are not "that it should be referred to the Committee, after it is answered." This would constitute a considerable difference. With respect to the indignation which the hon. Gentleman has exhibited in this House, I can only say that I heard him declare most solemnly to the right hon. Member for Cambridge University, when asked whether he had received any despatch from Jamaica with respect to the distress of that island, that he had received no despatch from Governor Grey, with respect to the distress of Jamaica, though he had that despatch in his possession at the time.

Mr. HAWES: In answer to the question put by the hon. Member, I have to say that the words on the minute are, I think, "that it should be referred to the Committee which is now sitting," without any reservation or qualification whatever. With respect to the question put by the right hon. Member for Cambridge University, and which the hon. Member has referred to, I think that all those questions were asked after I had been examined before the Committee; and after the arrival of the packets at that time the question was asked. The question, therefore, was answered with reference to the arrivals by those particular packets which had arrived. That despatch, I concluded, was sent to the Committee, of which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge was a Member; and I concluded he was in possession of that despatch. I answered, therefore, the question simply in reference to subsequent arrivals; and there has been some confusion thrown over this matter by the first question of the right hon. Member for Cambridge University referring to what is called the blue book, giving a general description of the colony. You will see that the answer had reference to that, and shows that I put that construction on it. I answered both in reference to the arrivals by those particular packets I have alluded to, and in reference to what is called the blue book.

Mr. MILES was quite sorry so much warmth had taken place about the charge against the Colonial Office. He cared not whether by Earl Grey, the hon. Gentleman opposite, or the clerks under them, but the fact was, that a despatch necessary to be laid before the Committee before they came to an adjudication, was suppressed—that the despatch was in their possession on the 27th of March—that on the 5th of April the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies was examined—that he afterwards had the power of looking over his evidence, and the despatch being asked for by the Committee, he was the person who must look to the despatch being duly presented, because it would not do on such an occasion to throw it on a clerk. Having been on the Committee on the Naval Estimates, he was not astonished at anything that took place, or that an attack should be made on the Colonial Office for the suppression of this despatch.

VISCOUNT PALMERSTON: The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down says it will not do to throw the fault on the clerk; but what if it happens that the duty of transmitting the despatch to the Committee rested with the clerk, or some subordinate person in the department? Now, in matters of this sort, it is as well to be correct; and I think one hon. Gentleman stated a few minutes ago, that my hon. Friend had said, when examined before the Committee, that he was not aware that any despatch, of the nature of that which was under discussion in the Committee, had been received in the Colonial Office. Now, in point of fact, that is not the answer which my hon. Friend gave. [Lord GEORGE BENTINCK: I read the answer.] If the noble Lord will allow me, I will prefer reading the answer again; the House should, as often as possible, know the exact words that were used. Something turns on the particular expression. The question is—

> "Does not the Governor write despatches to the Colonial Office on the subject of the state of the islands, besides that one particular paper in the course of the year?—Yes, certainly; but I am not aware of any despatches from him of any importance."

That which was stated just now as the answer of my hon. Friend is not the answer. The evidence goes on—

> "We have received from other colonies very considerable details as to the state of those colonies, and as to the prospects of agriculture; but from Jamaica I can find nothing of the kind."

But that is a question—it is not the answer of my hon. Friend. I quite understand now why it is there has been such an expression from many hon. Members in this House. They have mistaken the question for the answer. And having explained to them that that which they took for the answer was in point of fact the question, I will now, with the permission of the House, read the answer to the question. It certainly is an inconvenient practice which prevails frequently on Committees, to put the question in the shape of an assertion, instead of in the shape of an inquiry, and therefore it is very natural that the reader may be misled. Then this assertion, which is meant for a question, brings from my hon. Friend the following answer; but before I give the answer let me state again that my hon. Friend says in reply to the first question, that he is not aware that any despatch of the kind mentioned had been withheld from the Committee. He did not say he was not aware that any such had been received. And why did he say he was not aware that it had been withheld? Because he had made a minute, and the noble Lord at the head of the Colonial Office had made a minute, and directions had been given in the ordinary method of office, that the despatch should be transmitted to the Committee. And my hon. Friend was fully entitled to imagine and suppose the despatch had been sent to the Committee; and therefore my hon. Friend, when he stated that he was not aware that such a despatch had been withheld, was speaking under a justifiable natural conviction that the directions given had been carried into execution, and that the persons whose duty it was to transmit the despatch had transmitted it. Now we come to the second question:—

> "We have received from other colonies a very detailed agricultural account of the state of those colonies as to the prospects of agriculture, but from Jamaica I can find nothing of the kind?"

What is the answer? ["Read!"] You must allow me to make a few comments before I read. If my hon. Friend intended to suppress the fact that such a despatch had been received, his answer would have been that no such information had been received; but what does my hon. Friend reply? He says—

> "Until very recently, I think there has been no such general despatch received."

What is that but affirming that, recently, such a despatch had been received. So far from its being attempted to conceal or to suppress the fact, it is a direct assertion that such a despatch had been received, and the previous question shows that my hon. Friend was under the impression that the despatch which was received a few days before had been sent to the Committee. "The despatch is now preparing for the Committee." Is that withholding the knowledge of the despatch? Is that the answer of a man who meant to suppress the existence of the despatch?

"I ought to add, that the Governor has been a very short time in the colony. There is a despatch, but not of the nature to which the right hon Gentleman refers; however, whatever we have will be furnished."

I am sure that these three questions and answers, taken together, and read as they are printed, and not as the hon. Gentlemen have examined them, show conclusively that so far from there having been the slightest disposition or intention of concealing anything or withholding anything from the Committee, my hon. Friend acted under the firm conviction any man in his official situation would have entertained, that directions, officially given, had been officially carried into execution; that such a despatch existed; and it was for the Committee, when they found the despatch announced by my hon. Friend was not delivered to them, to have pursued the inquiry—to have asked where the despatch was, and why it was not delivered to them; and if blame lies at any man's door, for the despatch not having been given to the Committee before the Committee made a report, I think the blame is as much to be shared by the Members of the Committee, who, having had notice of the existence of the despatch, and of the intention of the Colonial Office to send it, made no inquiries upon the subject, or as to the person who omitted to send it.

Mr. HENLEY observed that the Prime Minister had referred the whole matter to the head of the Colonial Department, and expended a great deal of virtuous indignation that any Gentleman should think that the noble Lord had done anything wrong. But that did not exactly answer. Then came the Under Secretary for the Colonies, who entered into a regular disquisition on the question; but neither was that attended with any satisfactory result. The noble Lord at the head of the Foreign Department then dived to the bottom of the Colonial Office, and could think of no better expedient than that of fixing on an unfortunate clerk, on whom he threw all the censure for neglecting to send up the despatch. The noble Lord then quibbled about questions and answers; but the whole matter, after all, was a very simple one. It was easy to bandy angry expressions from one side to the other; but, after all, the question was one of facts. How did the questions and the answers to them hang together? The Under Secretary for the Colonies first told the Committee that there was no despatch of any importance that had been withheld. But then in answer to subsequent questions he went on to say that no despatch of the sort referred to (namely, respecting the distress of the colony) had been received except recently; and then came the third question, in reply to which he stated that whatever despatch had been received, should be laid before the Committee. Then arose the question whether there was any reason for supposing that the despatch had been kept away otherwise than by accident. It happened, however, that there were other matters to bear in mind. There were other despatches from Lord Harris and Mr. Light, which were said to bear materially on the question at issue, but which were not laid before the Committee. These were the plain facts of the case. Why were not these papers, whether important or not, laid before the Committee? They were not forthcoming, and it was not to be wondered at that there should be some suspicion that there had been a little practice in the whole affair. It was certainly rather singular that all the papers that related to one side were sent, but that those which related to the other were not. He hoped that the matter would be cleared up, as it was a mere matter of facts and dates. Some explanation ought to be offered to explain the reason why the despatch was not laid before the Committee.

The Marquess of GRANBY only wished to make one observation. The noble Lord the Foreign Secretary had read very glibly the questions, but he had hesitated at the answers, and he was not surprised at it, because the answers were in direct contradiction to the statements of the hon Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies. The Under Secretary had stated that it was the fault of the clerk in the Colonial Office that the despatches were not laid before the Committee; but the noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs read the answer of the Under Secretary before the Committee, from which it appeared that, instead of saying the clerk had not laid the despatch before the Committee, or that he was not aware that the document had not been laid before the Committee, he stated that the document was in preparation, thus showing that he must have known that the document on the 5th of April was not before the Committee. The noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs then charged the Committee with negligence in not taking care to ascertain whether the despatch in question had been produced, because the Under Secretary had stated it was in preparation; but if the noble Lord had read one sentence further he would have seen it stated that there was no such despatch.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER observed that the answers of his hon. Friend the Under Secretary for the Colonies were, if read in a fair spirit, quite consistent. In point of fact, no despatch that had been received had been withheld.

Debated adjourned.

House adjourned at half-past Two.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, June 26, 1848.

MINUTES.] *Took the Oaths.*—The Lord Kilmarnock.

PUBLIC BILLS. *Reported.*—Certificates for Killing Hares (Scotland).

3^{a} Evicted Destitute Poor (Ireland).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Durham, and several other Places, in favour of the Public Health Bill.—From the Borough of Fraserburgh, against any Alteration in the Navigation Laws.—From an Odd Fellows' Lodge, in Nottingham, in favour of the Provident Associations Fraud Prevention Bill, and for the Insertion of a Clause by which their Surplus Capital may be Invested in the Savings' Banks.—From the Royal Burgh of Ayr, in favour of the Law of Entail.—From the Guardians of the Clutton Union, Somerset, for the Adoption of Measures for the Better Suppression of Vagrancy.

EVICTED DESTITUTE POOR (IRELAND) BILL.

The Order of the Day read for the Third Reading of the above Bill.

The Queen's consent signified. Bill read read 3^{a}.

On Motion that the Bill do pass,

The MARQUESS of CLANRICADE moved—

> "That the Amendments which had been introduced into the First Clause of the Bill in its passage through Committee be struck out, and that the Bill be restored to its original shape."

The Bill, as originally passed, had provided that notice of eviction should be given to the clerk of the board of guardians. The Amendment in Committee was, that the notice should be served on the relieving officer, which was a provision by no means so desirable as that which had originally been contemplated. The second Amendment (or rather alteration) would go far to change the character of the Bill, and to impair its efficiency. It was, that instead of provision being made for a contingency so calamitous as an eviction in sufficient time to prevent the possibility of any injury to human life, no such provision should be made until within a few hours of the occurrence of the calamity. The Bill as originally worded, provided that a week's notice should be given; but the Amendment curtailed the term of notice to a few hours, which was a most blundering piece of legislation.

LORD MONTEAGLE defended the clause as amended.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS thought the notice should be served on the relieving officer, and not on the clerk of the board of guardians, and that a period of forty-eight hours, instead of seven days, would be sufficient. Let it then be made the duty of the relieving officer (and the Poor Law Commissioners might issue an order if requisite) to repair to the spot where the ejectment was to take place, to ascertain the number and circumstances of the destitute persons, and make provision for their removal to the workhouse. He should beg to move an Amendment accordingly.

The DUKE of LEINSTER felt bound to say, from his knowledge of Ireland, acquired by long residence in that country, that the amended Bill would best carry their Lordships' intention into effect.

The MARQUESS of CLANRICARDE would not object to substitute the relieving officer as the person on whom notice was to be served; but he still thought that forty-eight hours would be a very short and inconvenient period.

House divided:—Contents 47; Non-contents 58: Majority 11.

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Suffolk
Uxbridge
Yarborough

BISHOPS.

Durham
Hereford
Manchester

BARONS.

Byron
Camoys
Campbell
Cremorne
Colborne
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Malmesbury
Lucan
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Clare
Enniskillen
Egmont
Romney.
Stradbroke
Sheffield

VISCOUNTS.
Canterbury
Combermere
Hawarden
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BARONS.
Colchester
De Ros
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Forester
Boston
Kenyon
Bolton
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Paired off.

AGAINST.	FOR.
Lord Abinger	Duke of Bedford
Marquess of Salisbury	Earl of Zetland
Earl Hardwicke	Earl Spencer
Earl Delawarr	Bishop of Norwich
Earl Jersey	Lord Poltimore
Earl Digby	Earl Fortescue
Duke of Beaufort	Earl Fitzhardinge
Earl Kinnoul	Archb. of Canterbury
Earl of Munster	Earl of Erroll
Marq. of Londonderry	Earl Camperdown
Earl of Bandon	Earl Sefton
Earl Rosslyn	Lord Denman
Earl of Ellenborough	Lord Beauvale
Viscount Beresford	Lord Suffield
Marquess of Drogheda	Earl Lovelace
Earl of Wilton	Marquess of Donegal
Lord De Lisle	Lord Crewe
Viscount Exmouth	Lord Stafford
Lord Templemore	Lord Cornwallis
Lord Saltoun	Lord Dinorben

Other Amendments moved and agreed to. Bill passed.

GAME CERTIFICATES FOR KILLING HARES BILL.

House in Committee,

LORD REDESDALE moved to insert a clause to limit the authority from the owner and occupier of land to kill hares to one person only.

House divided:—Contents 36; Non-contents 23: Majority 13.

The EARL of CARDIGAN moved the following proviso:—

> "Provided that nothing in this Act shall be construed to allow any person or persons, not having a game certificate, to use any engine or wire commonly called a snare, or any trap of any description for taking game."

In moving this provision he expressed his disapproval of the Bill generally. He believed it would tend to encourage poaching. He had never heard from any of his tenants that hares committed injury, and he did not believe they did.

The DUKE of RICHMOND opposed the proviso. He was of opinion that hares did a great deal of harm, After all, this Bill would only allow a man to do what he liked with his own; for hares when they were on a farmer's land were his own property. For his part, he thought a farmer ought to have the power of killing all kinds of game when they were on his land. He thought a farmer ought to have the power of killing pheasants whenever he saw them on his land.

EARL GREY said, if the clause were inserted, the efficacy of the Bill would be destroyed in cases of small proprietors, and especially of market gardeners.

House divided:—Contents 20; Non-Contents 22: Majority 2.

House resumed.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, June 26, 1848.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—2° Constabulary Force (Ireland).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Cobden, from George Sturt, of St. Albans, for Including that Place in the Schedule of the Borough Elections (No. 2) Bill.—By Mr. Brotherton, from an Immense Number of Places, for an Extension of the Elective Franchise.—By Sir Edward Buxton, from the Town of Leigh, in the County of Essex, and several other Places, for Better Observance of the Lord's Day.—By Mr. W. Lockhart, from the Association of the West India Merchants and Planters of the City of Glasgow, for an Adequate Protection of the Sugar Trade.—By the Earl of Lincoln, from several Operative Bakers of Falkirk, and its Neighbourhood, for Inquiry respecting their Grievances.—By Sir Montague Cholmeley, and other Hon. Members, from several Lodges of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, in favour of an Extension of the Benefit Societies Act.—By Mr. Beckett, from Leeds, for an Amendment of the Benefit Building Societies Act.—From several of the Protestant Inhabitants of the Parish of Abbeyleix, Queen's County, for Encouragement to Schools in Connexion with the Church Education Society (Ireland).—By Colonel Mure, from the Commissioners of Supply of Renfrewshire, against the Lunatic Asylums (Scotland) Bill.

THE COLONIAL OFFICE.

MR. HAWES: Before the Order of the Day is read, I am anxious to make a statement to the House, in accordance with the pledge I gave to the House on Friday night, in order to enable it to judge of the correctness or incorrectness of certain statements made by the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord G. Bentinck) in his place in the course of the debate on the sugar question. I wish to put myself, in the first place, entirely right with the House. I shall abstain from any word which may be calculated to provoke any angry debate, or to wound the feelings of any one. And if, in the course of Friday evening, under, I humbly think, somewhat justifiable provocation, I made use of language which to the House may have appeared objectionable, I wish the House to understand that I withdraw any such statement. But there were statements made and imputations cast on the department in which I have the honour to serve, and upon myself, which I cannot possibly allow to pass without a distinct reply. The noble Lord made, in point of fact, two charges. There were charges which he brought against the Colonial Office of withholding certain despatches, one from Sir H. Light, Governor of British Guiana, and one from Lord Harris, the Governor of Trinidad. I mention the former charge more especially because the noble Lord said the inclosure of the despatch had been sent to the Committee, but the despatch itself had been withheld. The other charge is entirely personal to myself, affecting my character and my personal conduct and honour as a Member of this House. I shall deal, first of all, with the charges which relate to the Colonial Department. I shall reserve the other charge for a distinct explanation. The noble Lord, as I understood, complained that a certain enclosure of a despatch from Governor Light, which he called Mr. Stipendiary Strutt's report, being the report of Mr. Strutt, who is a stipendiary magistrate in British Guiana, had been sent to the Committee, which was calculated to make some impression on the Committee more favourable to the views of my noble Friend at the head of the Colonial Office, than to those of the noble Lord. Now, the despatch of Sir H. Light was received on the 24th of April. The Committee, it was understood, were then deliberating on their report; and therefore that despatch was reserved for the papers which were to be laid on the table of the House for consideration preparatory to the debate. But I wish to call the attention of the House and of the noble Lord to the fact, that when Mr. Strutt's paper was communicated to the Committee, it was stated to be a copy of Mr. Stipendiary Strutt's report, dated December 31, 1847, which had been transmitted in Governor Light's despatch of March 12, 1848, and received on April 24, 1848, clearly showing, also, that the despatch was received at that time, and intimating to the Committee that there could, therefore, be no intention of concealing the fact that such a despatch had been received. That I find in the 8th report, page 12, of the papers and evidence published. As to the despatch, I have no hesitation in saying, I wish the despatch had been sent to the Committee with the report. But what operated with us in not sending it was, that it did not occur to any gentleman in the office that the despatch contained any new matter whatever. There was no portion of that report, except one I shall mention presently, which seemed to us to require any immediate transmission of that despatch, inasmuch as the papers were about to be printed for the use of Parliament. But we sent to the noble Lord Mr. Strutt's report, the enclosure. The despatch was omitted. If you refer to Governor Light's despatch, as printed in the papers laid before the House, it will be seen that there was a most important passage in the despatch which would have added tenfold to the weight of the statement of Mr. Strutt. And if there were any object to be gained, or any desire to make an impression on the Committee, it would have manifestly been gained by sending that despatch, in which Sir H. Light remarked, that "Mr. Strutt's remarks as to sugar are allowed generally to be correct." If we had wished to make any great impression with that report, we should have sent the despatch. The despatch, indeed, was not sent to the Committee; but there could have been no desire to conceal its contents, because, in point of fact, it was laid on the table, and was in circulation during the Whitsuntide recess. A statement of the facts must therefore put an end to all imputations whatsoever on the Colonial Department as to their intentions. With respect to the Trinidad despatch, the noble Lord also complained. That despatch was not received till the 5th of May. It passed in regular course from the department of the Secretary of State. After passing to my hands, it passed from my hands to my noble Friend Earl Grey); but it did not reach his hands till the 8th of May, the very day on which the noble Lord moved for papers. That despatch consequently was, in compliance with the Motion of the noble Lord, produced; and it is to be found in the papers before the House. So far I have endeavoured to meet the charges of suppression in the case of those papers. I would simply remind the House on that point, that as the despatches were published with their respective dates, and the dates of their reception also were published, that fact puts an end to all notion that there could be any intentional withholding of the despatches. Incidentally I wish to clear one point on which there is some doubt, having reference to a question which was put by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Goulburn). If he refers to my examination before the Committee, I stated, that there was a despatch containing some account of the state of the island of Jamaica, but not of that general kind which I all along understood. I stated distinctly, that that despatch was preparing for the House. Some time afterwards I find, on referring to the papers, a right hon. Gentleman asked me a question soon after the arrival of the mail. I take the question and answer from the *Times* of the 16th of May:—

> "Mr. Goulburn inquired, whether any advice had yet been received from Jamaica, giving an account of the state and prospects of that island?
>
> "Mr. Hawes was sorry to say, that the Government had not yet received what was called the blue book, and had only general accounts from the island."

The same right hon. Gentleman put another question to me on the 6th of June; and in answer to that question, and in reference to that particular mail, I stated that "the Colonial Office had not received any account of any distress existing in Jamaica;" and the fact is, that what is called "the general account" has not arrived to this hour. In answering those questions, I assure the right hon. Gentleman that I referred entirely to the general account, and I know I can rely upon the just and generous interpretation of the right hon. Gentleman of any statement I make to the House. I mention this matter only incidentally, but I wish to stand well with him and the House. I now come to the charge personal to myself. I can assure the noble Lord, that, in dealing with this charge, although I labour under very strong feeling, and although I find that my private and public character are entirely at stake, I shall not allow myself to use a hasty expression. So keen is my sense of the evil consequence of altercation in this House—so keen is my apprehension of the results likely to ensue elsewhere, that I shall not now be guilty of using a single expression—although I labour under very strong feelings—calculated to give the slightest offence. Now, I shall read to the House what I understand to be the charge of the noble Lord. The noble Lord said, that—

> "If these minutes and memorandums were not got up subsequently to his examination of the 5th of April, he was troubled with the shortest memory since the days of green-bag notoriety, when Theodore Majocchi gave his answer of *Non mi ricordo.* That was the charge I made, and the hon. Gentleman may take his option whether or not, after these various discussions and various minutes to which he affixed his name, he, on the 5th of April, could not remember the receipt of any despatch of an important nature."

The noble Lord stopped there. The House will recollect that my answer was, that I was "not aware of any despatches of any importance that had been withheld from the Committee." The noble Lord, in continuation, said—

> "That he (Mr. Hawes) could not on the 5th of April recollect, notwithstanding these separate discussions on the subject of that despatch, and its importance, that any important despatch, or that any despatch connected with the agricultural and social state of Jamaica, had been received. That is the charge I make against the hon. Gentleman; and I care nothing whether he makes his defence against the one or the other of the horns of the dilemma on which I place him, and from which he cannot escape."

Now, the first horn of the dilemma is that I declared I was not aware of any important despatch that had been received from the Governor of Jamaica. I will read precisely what I said. Mr. Goulburn put this question to me—

> "Can you explain the reason why we have no accounts, in the papers laid before Parliament, of the character of those from other colonies?"

My answer was—

> "I imagine you allude to the blue book, to the annual accounts from Jamaica."

The next question was—

> "There is no account of the state of the island, as in the other cases?"

I replied—

> "That is generally comprised in the annual report called the blue book, and that has not been received."

The next question was—

> "Does not the Governor write despatches to the Colonial Office on the subject of the state of the island, besides that one particular paper in the course of the year?"

My answer was—

> "Yes, certainly; but I am not aware of any despatches from him of any importance"—

I beg the House to recollect that here the noble Lord stopped short—I added, "which have been withheld from the Committee." You will see, therefore, that I spoke of despatches not having been withheld. I said—

> "There are despatches, but I am not aware of any despatches from him of any importance which have been withheld from the Committee."

The next question was—

> "We have received from other colonies very considerable details as to the state of those colonies and as to the progress of agriculture; but from JamaicaI can find nothing of the kind?"—"Until very recently" (I said) "I think there has been no such general despatch received; that despatch is now printing for this Committee. I ought to add that the Governor has been in the island but a very short time."

But that simply had reference to the annual report, to the blue book. The last part of the question refers entirely to the blue book, and the annual account of the island of Jamaica, which up to this hour has not been received. Then the noble Lord the Chairman of the Committee said—

> "That is preparing, is it?" (and I answered) "There is a despatch, but still not of the nature to which the right hon. Gentleman alludes; however, whatever we have will be furnished."

Now I ask the House to say whether or not there is anything there to justify the statement of the noble Lord, that I declared that I was not aware that any important despatches had been received from Jamaica? I have shown to the House, by reference to my evidence, that my statement was as to despatches which had been received and "withheld." Now the despatch to which I was referring in my evidence was one which did not make that strong impression on my mind that it has on others; but it was one that I was acquainted with, and which I read with some attention on account of its contents, to which I will refer. It is said that this despatch was withheld from the Committee. That despatch, which I have now before me, occupies about a single page of the blue book. There are two important points in that despatch. The noble Lord attaches importance to that portion of it where the Governor says that a protective duty of 2*d.* in the pound should be laid upon foreign sugar as against colonial sugar, which he suggested should be a penny a pound; and where the Governor states his general opinion in favour of protection. That is the point to which the noble Lord attaches importance. I own that I do not attach importance to it; but what I did think of importance in the despatch was this, that in referring to the report of the Legislative Assembly, which accompanied this despatch, on the general state of agriculture, and the cost of production of sugar, the Governor says—

> "With respect to the cost of cultivation, an examination of the tables will show that the stated general average of the cost per hundred weight rests upon a basis which makes it a very unsafe criterion in many respects, and in none more so than as the criterion of a general average rate for the wages of agricultural labour."

Looking at that part of the despatch, therefore, there could be no motive whatever in withholding it from the Committee. But now I come to the other horn of the dilemma, which I feel that I am equally relieved from; and when I have answered that, I shall call upon the noble Lord to withdraw the charge he has made against me. Now, I hold the despatch in my hand; and I must again trouble the House with reading from it the exact minutes, and stating accurately the results of my inquiries as to the non-production of that despatch before the Committee at the time they were sitting. It was received on the 27th of March; and the first minute is made by a gentleman in the Colonial Office, Mr. Cox—a gentleman of high honour, of considerable ability, and in whom I have the most implicit reliance. He is known to many in this House, and I cannot speak more highly of any man than I can of Mr. Cox. Now, Mr. Cox states—

> "This is a report (meaning the report of the Legislative Assembly) for a copy of which the West India Committee have asked. We had a copy in the Votes, which was to have been sent to the Committee to-day. Would it not be better to send instead a copy of this despatch, which is important, with the report and the evidence, which we have now got for the first time? There are two copies. And so it is desirable to send it to-day."

The next person who received that despatch was Mr. Elliot, the Assistant Under Secretary of State, and he says, addressing me—

> "I conclude that you will agree with me that the despatch ought to be given in at the same time as the report which it enclosed."

That is dated the 27th of March. It came to me on the same day, and I attached my initials. It goes to my noble Friend, Earl Grey, I imagine on the 28th, because it often happens that I do not get despatches until I have returned from this House, and they then bear date at the latest moment of the day on which I receive them. My noble Friend receives this despatch, I believe, on the 28th; and his first minute on it is this:—

> "This may be laid before the Committee as suggested; but it also requires to be answered with some care."

And then he proceeds to give the draft answer which he intends returning to it. It comes back from my noble Friend on the 30th of March. My noble Friend sees the head of the West India department, and verbally instructs him to draft the answer to go out by the mail on the 1st of April. The despatch, however, required more consideration than at first it seemed to demand; the answer could not be sent on the 1st of April, but remained for several days—until the 14th of April—in the hands of my noble Friend; and on the 14th goes back to the department with the instruction annexed to it, my noble Friend believing that the despatch was then sent to the Committee, as indeed I did. Why was it not sent to the Committee on the 14th of April, in time to answer the object of the noble Lord? I will state to the House, that, if blame could be fairly attributed to me or to my noble Friend, I would have taken that blame openly before the House, and would not allow it to be transferred to any other gentleman. But I took care to see my friend Mr. Cox before I came down to the House, and with his consent I now state, that he ought to have seen that the direction was executed, but that he omitted to do so. I ask the House then, whether under all the circumstances, I can give any fairer or more frank reply to the charge of the noble Lord? I hope I have given it also with perfect temper, and I now appeal to the House for protection against a very gross charge that has been made against me, because the noble Lord said, if my memory did not fail me, when I was examined that then those minutes must have been fraudulently concocted, in order to meet the case when it was first discovered. Now I ask the noble Lord, in all fairness, whether he means to adhere to that? I ask the noble Lord—a Gentleman holding a high position in this House and in the country—whether he can for one moment say that this charge can be justified by the facts? And, Sir, if the noble Lord adheres to that charge, I shall then call upon this House to institute a complete inquiry into all the facts of the case. I will not submit to a half acquittal in this matter. I will be convicted of the guilt which is imputed to me, or I will again stand fairly and honourably before the House. I am not aware that, during the long period I have had the honour of a seat in this House, I ever yet had such doubt and discredit cast upon me; and I think I have a right, having fully, fairly, and frankly explained this matter to the House, to appeal to the noble Lord, to ask him now to state whether he means to adhere to this charge, and if he does, to allow me to have it investigated? I will give him every name—I will conceal nothing—and I trust when that is done that the House will see that the declaration I now make, that I am entirely free from so groundless a charge, is one which will be sustained by evidence, and backed by the credit of Gentlemen of the highest character.

Lord G. BENTINCK: Sir, I am sure that everybody who has listened to the hon. Gentleman must be perfectly satisfied that his statement of the minutes upon that despatch is perfectly correct. But, Sir, the hon. Gentleman has not made out any case to show that the Colonial Office did not withhold the information from the Committee. I made two distinct charges: one was, that the Colonial Office had systematically kept back the information which Parliament ought to have been in possession of in February, and which the Committee of which I was the Chairman ought to have been put in possession of in the course of their inquiries. The other charge I made against the hon. Gentleman was this—that, in his evidence, on the 5th of April, he displayed a very short memory in all those memoranda and in all those discussions which had taken place with respect to this despatch. Well, Sir, I confess, for one, that I am still more surprised, even after the statement the hon. Gentleman has made to-day, that he should have given the answers which he did give before that Committee; because, though it is true that, in the course of his evidence, he said that he was not aware of any important despatch that had been withheld from the Committee, yet the inquiry of the right hon. Gentleman, a Member of that Committee (Mr. Goulburn), went distinctly to the character of this very despatch, which the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary, in answer to my last question, distinctly stated was not the character of the despatch which was then in preparation. But, Sir, let there be no mistake. Having reminded the House of the evidence before the Committee, I shall take leave to ask its attention whilst I show to it that there had been the greatest anxiety about these despatches from Jamaica, and that both before and after the 5th of April repeated inquiries were made regarding the information from Jamaica; and on every occasion the representative of the Government, be he who he might, the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, in the absence of the Under Secretary for the Colonies, distinctly denied that there was any information from Jamaica. Now then, Sir, let us weigh well what was the spirit of the question, and what was the spirit of the answer made by the hon. Gentleman. Not one word was mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman who was the querist about the blue book. The hon. Gentleman was asked to explain " why we have no accounts, in the papers laid before Parliament from Jamaica, of the character of those from other colonies?" Now, we had one blue book, at that time, from Trinidad; but I believe that that was the only blue book that had been laid before Parliament. Therefore, whilst the words, in their common and ordinary sense, did not direct any attention to a blue book, it was clear, by analogy, that, as the comparison was drawn between the other papers which had been laid before Parliament, and those which had been laid before the Committee, the blue book was not the only paper which the right hon. Gentleman had in his mind when he asked the question. Well, the hon. Gentleman says—

> " I imagine you allude to the blue book—to the annual account from Jamaica."

The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Goulburn) then says—

> " There is no account of the state of the island, as in other cases?"

Clearly the right hon. Gentleman was going on to say that they had many blue-book despatches on the subject of the distressed people of the island. The hon. Gentleman still perseveres, however, in saying—

> " That is generally comprised in the annual report called the 'blue book,' and the fact is, we have not received it."

But the right hon. Gentleman is not at all satisfied with that answer. The right hon. Member for Cambridge clearly considers this an evasion of his question, or if not an evasion, no answer at all to his question; and he says—

> " Does not the Governor write despatches to the Colonial Office on the subject of the state of the island, besides that one particular paper in the close of the year?"

And the Under Secretary answers—

> " Yes, certainly; but I am not aware of any despatches from him of any importance which have been withheld from the Committee."

I understand the hon. Gentleman now to mean to say that the despatch had, as he imagined, then been laid before the Committee. [Mr. Hawes: Ordered to be laid before them.] Yes, ordered to be laid before the Committee. And then, in answer to the next question—

> " We have received from other colonies very considerable details as to the state of these colonies, and as to the prospects of agriculture; but from Jamaica I can find nothing of the kind;"

the hon. Gentleman replies—

> " Until very recently I think there has been no such general despatch received; that despatch is now printed for this Committee. I ought to add, that the Governor has been in the island but a very short time."

Mr. HAWES: That had reference to the blue book, following upon what I said about the annual account.

Lord G. BENTINCK: But the matter is put beyond all doubt by the answer to my question. I said, " That is preparing, is it?" The answer was in the affirmative—

> " There is a despatch, but still it is not of the nature to which the right hon. Gentleman alludes; and whatever we have will be furnished."

" It is not of the nature to which the right hon. Gentleman alludes!" Why, the despatch, when forthcoming, is of that nature, and of nothing else. It is exclusively of that nature. It touches no other matter; and of all the despatches that had been laid before the House or the Committee, it was the most important that could have been laid before the Committee at that critical moment. But, Sir, I have shown you before that this intelligence had gone out to Jamaica, and that the effect in Jamaica was, that a general opinion prevailed that Sir Charles Grey, their Governor, had neglected, if he had not betrayed, his trust, and had given no account whatever of the distress of the island. This evidence of the hon. Gentleman was given on the 5th of April, in a crowded room, full of the agents of the West Indies, who, no doubt, wrote to their correspondents in Jamaica, who must have thought it extraordinary that up to the 5th of April the Governor of Jamaica had sent no important despatch relating to agricultural subjects, such as that for which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge had so often inquired. The consequence was, that this statement goes out to the West Indies, and six weeks afterwards, by the following packet, there comes back, on the 15th of May, that intelligence which I stated to the House from the *Jamaica Dispatch*, in which it is said—

> "Whatever may be our opinion of the present Ministry, and however incapable we believe their representative here to be, we cannot bring ourselves to the supposition that any set of men entrusted with the government of the empire would dare to disregard the well-authenticated distresses of any portion of Her Majesty's subjects. In what light those distresses have been represented by Sir Charles Grey, or what his representations of the condition of the colony may have been, we are unfortunately ignorant."

And let me call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade to what follows:—

> "Mr. Labouchere officially declared, in the House of Commons, that the Government had received no despatches from Jamaica, explanatory of its political and social condition. The matter lies between the two official gentlemen. Either one has grievously mis-stated, or the other has withheld the only service that could be hoped for from him—namely, a true detail of facts. We have reason to know that steps have been taken to find out where the fault lies, and we have already expressed our belief that important despatches were purposely kept back by Government. What those despatches may be the future alone can disclose."

Now, on the 8th of February, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge put this question to the right hon. Gentleman opposite; and the article from the *Jamaica Dispatch* has reference not to this particular despatch, of which I have treated before, but has reference to the answer of the right hon Gentleman:—

> "Mr. Goulburn wished to know why Jamaica had been omitted in the statement of affairs of the several West India colonies, which had been laid before the House; and also if there would be any objection on the part of the Government to lay the last despatches before the Committee?"—Mr. Labouchere said, as the right hon. Gentleman had the kindness to give him notice of his intention to put this question, he had applied to the Colonial Office on the subject, and was enabled to state that the reason no blue book respecting Jamaica had been laid on the table of the House was that none had been received."

But he goes on to say—

> "With respect to the latter part of the right hon. Gentleman's question, he had to say that no despatch had been received giving any general account of the state of Jamaica; but as soon as such document was received it was the intention of his noble Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies to communicate it without delay to the House."

Now, I will show to you that there had been a despatch received at that time. I am speaking of the 8th of February. On the 7th of February a debate took place in the other House of Parliament in which Earl Grey—and, no doubt, this provoked in some manner the inquiry of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Goulburn), who is here to answer for himself, and with whom I have had no communication—on that day Earl Grey stated in the other House of Parliament— [Mr. SPEAKER: The noble Lord must not refer to the debates of the other House.] Well, the head of the Colonial Office stated in another place, that—

> "With regard to the state of Jamaica, he stated, that among many documents that had passed through his hands connected with the state of the colonies, he was very much struck with one received the other day from a number of planters in the western part of Jamaica, in which they stated, that they had invested capital to the extent of not less than 142,000*l.* in plantations in the colony; and they added what was a most remarkable fact, that with one exception they had all purchased their plantations since the passing of the Emancipation Act. That showed what a change of system was in progress in that island, and he believed that in the course of a few years more of the soil of Jamaica would be cultivated by planters carrying on business for themselves, and forming resident owners and proprietors, than had ever been the case before. So far from believing that the prospects of Jamaica were bad, he was not aware of any part of the British dominions in which there was so favourable a prospect for the investment of capital at this moment as Jamaica. He believed that a man with capital would have a greater prospect of realising a fortune in Jamaica, than in any other field of investment."

No doubt the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge was astonished, with his local knowledge of Jamaica, at that flourishing account of the colony, in which his own estate presented no such pleasing prospect; and, therefore, he put the question to the right hon. Gentleman opposite, which he answered on the authority of the Colonial Office in the way he had described. Now we shall see what was the fact elicited by the address moved for by the Committee of which I had the honour to be Chairman. You will see of what information the Colonial Office was in possession, and of what information Earl Grey was himself in possession at that very time. I shall read you an extract of what was done by him—it was a remarkable document, and the more so as it was brought forward to elucidate a principle laid down with great confidence by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The document states—

> "The manufacture was one of the nicest kind,

requiring all the skill of the farmer and of the manufacturer; and to suppose that it could be carried on across the Atlantic by a proprietor residing in this country, and ignorant himself, necessarily, in the majority of instances, of the details which his agent conducts, was, in his mind, the greatest delusion."

Now let me read the sequel of this same interesting document, which was read in another place to prove the prosperous state of the colony of Jamaica. It says—

> "Now, we are resident proprietors, and all of us, with one exception, have purchased and leased our properties since the Emancipation Act. It will be evident from the facts stated, that we cannot cultivate for another year; indeed, we have not the means, unaided, of taking off the present crop, and the British West India merchants are now unable to assist us, and of course disinclined, where there is no hope of profit, or even of recovering their advances. If we, being proprietors and lessees, living on and managing our own properties, brought up to tropical agriculture, and availing ourselves of every practical improvement, have only such a result to exhibit as is set forth in the statement of these facts, the inference is conclusive that the position of the absentee proprietor or mortgagee, represented by paid agencies, is still more deplorable. It is evident, that unless some mode of suppressing slavery and the slave trade more effectual than that hitherto pursued be adopted, and without immediate aid, in the shape of money loans, sugar cultivation, upon which 300,000 of the emancipated negroes are wholly dependent, must cease in Jamaica. But our object in submitting these facts to your Lordship is to enable you to draw your own inferences, and suggest your own remedies, and we beg you will consider our desperate position as an excuse for troubling you with the statement."

"Our desperate condition!" and this, although embodied in the same document, is entirely withheld by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, from the knowledge of the Committee. But I come now specially to the answer given by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade on the authority of the Colonial Office, that there was no despatch—that none had been received from the colonies giving any general account of the state of the colony of Jamaica; but as soon as such a document was received it was the intention of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to communicate it without delay to the House. Now I will read you a despatch from Governor Grey, of the 22nd October, more than three weeks before the papers relating to Trinidad had been moved for, and before I had given notice of my Motion in this House, but a despatch which was not forthcoming till the 28th March. It is dated the 22nd September, 1847, and this is what Sir Charles Grey writes to Earl Grey, who paints the prospects of Jamaica in such florid colours:—

> "I think it my duty to mention that the low price to which sugar has recently fallen in the London market, without any corresponding reduction of duty, really threatens with ruin many of the planters who have latterly been struggling hard to keep their heads above water; and that I perceive indications of a movement within the island to support, in the next Session of the Imperial Parliament, the party which asserts the principle of protection. It is not unlikely that, with this object in view, there may be an effort of the planters' party in the House of Assembly here to delay the annual revenue bills and the principal business of the Session of the island Legislature until after Christmas. My utmost efforts and most studious endeavours will be employed to persuade them to the most temperate and salutary course of action. But I cannot deny that, whilst corn and cotton are imported into the United Kingdom duty free, the duty of 14*s.* on the cwt. of muscovado sugar, which amounts to 66 per cent on the Kingston price, and which, having been about 42 per cent on the London price when the reduction of duty took place in March, 1845, is now about 56 per cent upon the latest London price, as given in the *Gazette*, is a very heavy toll to be paid by British consumers for admission into the home market; nor that there is a sincere apprehension amongst the persons most thoroughly acquainted with the subject, that with the present London prices of West India sugar, and the present rate of duties, it will be impossible to carry on here, without loss and ruin, the cultivation of sugar for exportation."

I do ask the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade and the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of the Colonies, and I ask the noble Lord at the head of the Government, how he reconciles with the statements made in another place, or with the statements made by that right hon. Gentleman, the possession and concealment of this despatch from the Governor of Jamaica. I ask whether it was fair to the Governor General of that colony to give the answer that the right hon. Gentleman gave on the 8th February in this House, following up the statement made by the noble Lord the Secretary of State for the Colonies in another place, and that that answer should go forth to the colonies in opposition to the statement of the Governor, and against the declared sentiments of the representative of the Queen in Jamaica, degrading his dignity and injuring his authority. But I take leave to remind the House that this is not the only instance of concealment. I come now to the case of the Trinidad papers. On the 25th November I gave notice in this House that I should move the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the present state of distress and the prospects of the British colonies in the East and West Indies. My Motion was followed up next day by a Motion of the hon. Member for Montrose for papers relating to Trinidad. My Motion stood for the 9th December; but it was afterwards, in consequence of the application of the Government, arising from the illness of the noble Lord, postponed to the 23rd December; but it was cut short by the adjournment of the House on the 21st December. Well, were there any despatches from Trinidad? There were two despatches from Governor Lord Harris to that time, one dated the 4th September, and received the 4th October; and the other dated the 18th September, and received by the following mail, the 22nd October. Both these despatches had been received when the hon. Gentleman moved for these papers. Well, in the despatch of the 4th September, Lord Harris writes—

> "With respect to the introduction of emigrants, 500 or 1,000 emigrants in each year can have no perceptible effect on the price of labour, and unless that is remedied, and that quickly, I do not see how the cultivation of sugar can be carried on with any prospect of success. I can assure your Lordship (he is addressing Earl Grey), that I have it on the best authority, that even under the most favourable circumstances the price of sugar will not pay the cost of cultivation, and that the distress that consequently exists in this colony has never been equalled."

That was followed a fortnight afterwards by another despatch, in which he says—

> "I have already mentioned to your Lordship the distress existing in this colony, and which is increasing daily, and amounts to an unprecedented stagnation of business, cases of which are brought to my notice constantly. For instance, an estate having a promise of a much larger crop than had ever previously been produced, being almost abandoned for want of the necessary labour, and those instances are frequently most distressing."

Again—

> "I have also stated that the chief cause of this, although it may to a certain extent be attributed to the state of the money market, is, that the price of sugar will not repay the cost of production;"

and he finishes by stating—

> "I do not hesitate to express to your Lordship my conviction that if this colony is not to be left to subside into a state of comparative barbarism, which would result from the ruin of its larger proprietors, some more than ordinary relief is necessary to support the contest which, in common with the other British colonies, it is engaged in; and, circumstanced as it is, I believe it is incapable of competing in the British market with the produce of slave-labour countries, unless the advantages of free trade are conceded to it as well as its disadvantages, and I will add, that the relief must come speedily if it is to produce any good effect."

Now, when were these despatches moved for? They were moved for on the 26th November. The House having sat four weeks afterwards, when were they presented to Parliament? On the evening of the night in which the debate closed in this House. Statements were made, both in this and the other House of Parliament—I mean elsewhere—that never could have been made had this House and the country been in possession of the despatches I have now read. The fact was, that a great speech went out from the Minister of State to the country, creating a great prejudice against the West India colonies, proving that all the difficulties were from want of residence and want of energy, and stating that nothing was required but a little more stimulus, a little more capital, and a little more free trade, to make the West Indies one of the most desirable sites for the investment of capital. Well, then, if I show you the studied manner in which the information was kept back from both Houses of Parliament, particularly during the debate of the 3rd and 4th February in this House, and that of the 7th in the other House, and then if I show you that these important despatches were in some way kept back from the Committee of which I had the honour to be Chairman, do not I give you proof positive of that which I allege against the Colonial Office, that the West Indian colonies have not had fair play from the Colonial Office in this matter? Those who were set over them as their guardians and protectors, had acted entirely on the Committee as though they were prosecutors, and as though the suffering West Indians were culprits arraigned at the bar as public offenders. I will now go back again—having paved the way to show that this was part of a system—I will now go back to the month of April. Granted that all is right—that it was the honest intention of the Colonial Office on the 22d March to lay those important despatches before the Committee—granting for a moment that it was some extraordinary obliviousness of the understanding on the part of the hon. Gentleman opposite—granting that the hon. Gentleman could not understand the plain questions that were put to him by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University—and that the minds of the Committee were most unintentionally led to the belief that there was no such despatch at all received relating to the agricultural and social state of the island—I want to know how the hon. Gentleman will account for the after proceedings and the after answers which had been given to the earnest inquiries of the Committee? Sir, I beg pardon of the House for entering thus far into those nice details; but I must go into them to show the importance of those matters, and I will make it clear to you yet that there was a guilty holding back of this despatch. Sir, the Committee closed its evidence on the 5th of April, and adjourned for the recess. The House met again after the Easter holidays, on, I think, Monday, the 1st of May. On Tuesday, the 2nd of May, I think, I summoned the Committee to receive the draft of the report which had been prepared on the last day we had sat. On Wednesday, the 3rd of May, I had forwarded to both the right hon. Gentlemen that had sat upon the Committee copies of the resolutions and the report. Well, we met at three o'clock on Thursday, the 4th of May. It was a *pro formâ* meeting, in order that the Chairman might present the report and the resolutions agreed to. Only six or seven Members were then present. The right hon. Gentleman opposite then expressed his regret that there should be so few Members present; and, speaking upon the part of the Government, he said that he had been very desirous to learn the impressions which the evidence taken before the Committee had made upon the minds of the Members; and the right hon. Gentleman gave us to understand, that though the Government would not be governed by the majority of the Committee in the course they might afterwards pursue, they would, nevertheless, think it their duty, knowing the great labour and the unremitting exertions with which the Committee had pursued this inquiry, to be much influenced by the opinions to which they had come upon the subject. Well, accordingly, it was by arrangement agreed upon, on Thursday, the 4th of May, that the Committee should be adjourned until the Tuesday following, in order that there might be a full attendance of the Committee. The right hon. Gentleman had expressed his hope that we should meet in a friendly manner, and that the Government might learn of what opinion that Committee was. On the same Thursday, the 4th of May, as had been stated by the hon. Gentleman, we did receive a manuscript—and I here take the liberty of saying that a great portion of the despatches received from the Colonial Office were in manuscript—we did receive, I say, a manuscript extract from Mr. Stipendiary Magistrate Strutt. The hon. Gentleman had no doubt entered into an explanation upon this point; but why were those other despatches from Governor Light kept back? Why, I ask, were the despatches from Lord Harris kept back? I speak not of the one despatch that was received on the 5th of May—that is not the one which I alone referred to the other night. I referred to a despatch received simultaneously with the despatch received from Mr. Stipendiary Strutt on the 24th of April; and that there may be no mistake on the subject, let me read a portion of the despatch to which I refer. This is a despatch from Lord Harris, dated Trinidad, March 23rd. His Lordship said—

> "I have thought it right to forward to your Lordship as early as possible a return, showing the probable state of the treasury of this colony on the 1st of April next. It has been made with as much accuracy as possible. It shows that at the end of the quarter there will be a defalcation of 6,253*l.*, and this is the lowest probable estimate that can be made. Supposing that the diminution in the receipts should continue in the same ratio as at present, it is necessary for me to endeavour to show what the state of our finances will be on the 1st July, in order that if possible some means may be found of meeting the liabilities of the Government. From the almost entire cessation of imports, and the very low price of sugars, on which the amount of export duties depends, the receipts can hardly be calculated with prudence at more than 1,000*l.* per week, which, for thirteen weeks, is 13,000*l.* Against this there is default of previous quarter, 6,253*l.*; salaries for quarter, about 8,000*l*; liabilities for buildings undertaken and obliged to be carried on, but for which some delay would be granted by the contractors, 2,428*l.*; for sundries, averaging per quarter, 1,500*l.*; police, gaol, hospital, and leper asylum, averaging per month 1,300*l.*, 3,900*l.*; total, 22,181*l.*; deduct 13,000*l.*; probable deficit on the 1st of July, 9,181*l.*"

And he concluded with some information, which would be most important to the subject under the inquiry of the Committee at the time with respect to the loan. Lord Harris goes on to say—

> "It is absolute necessity which alone induces me to trouble your Lordship with that statement; but it is quite clear that either some assistance in aid of the revenue must be found, or else that a general reduction of salaries must at once be effected; for after the month of August the receipts begin to diminish, and continue to do so up to December. I am not aware whether any portion of the sum of 200,000*l.* granted as a loan could be applied to the immediate relief of the colony; but I can assure your Lordship that such assistance is of vital importance, and would prove

an incalculably greater boon than any immigration at the present time. I receive daily the account of orders being received for no weeding or cultivation to be carried on, on estates, for the next year's crop; and these orders from large English merchants, to whom up to the present time the influx of money may be attributed, and who have worked their properties on the most liberal terms."

I did not like to trouble the House at half-past twelve o'clock on the former occasion when I spoke upon this subject, or I might have shown the House that there were other despatches kept back than those to which I then referred. In respect to those received upon the 5th of May, I take leave to say we had laid before us from the Foreign Office all documents that had been received up to the one dated the 11th of May from the Marquess of Normanby, from Paris, and other despatches dated 10th March from Rio Janeiro. And, therefore, if we could have had all these despatches which had arrived up to the 11th and 12th of May at the Foreign Office, is there any excuse, the Committee having continued sitting, for not giving the despatches which had been received at the Colonial Office so late as the 5th of May? Now, let me call the attention of the House to the despatch which was received on the 5th of April from Governor Higginson, which was dated the 10th of March. Recollect that this was not received on the 5th of May, but the 5th of April, a month before the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hawes) came before the Committee for examination. Governor Higginson, writing to Earl Grey from St. John (Montserrat) on the 10th of March said—

> "In my despatch, No. 72, of the 11th September last, I apprised your Lordships of the disastrous state to which adverse circumstances had reduced this one flourishing settlement; and I deeply regret to observe that Mr. Baynes's report, now submitted, is not calculated to convey a more favourable impression than I was myself led to form during my recent sojourn in the island."

Here is a blue book from Montserrat, communicated under the same cover, and yet withheld from the Committee, although it gave most important information upon the agricultural state of that island. It entered into details of the great depreciation of property there, stating that—

> "The estates of the late Mr. Dudley Semper, which, estimated as all the properties were at the time of their valuation, at scarcely more than half of their value, are rated in the levy bill at 27,700*l.*, were lately sold for 295*l.*; they were, it is true, bought by the mortgagee, whose claim amounted to 11,000*l.*; still the circumstance testifies to the great depreciation that has taken place. Mr. Trott's properties, valued at 18,100*l.*, sold for the amount of taxes due on them, 181*l.*: this was by arrangement; but the absence of speculators on so favourable an occasion speaks either a total want of capital, or great distrust of the future prospects of the colony. There have been frequent sales of unencumbered freehold property, not much disproportionate: thus the house of Mr. Brinn, valued at 400*l.*, was first sold in execution for taxes for 3*l.* 1*s.* 9*d.*, and being redeemed by him, was soon after put up again for public sale for default under the Loan Act, and knocked down for 55*l.* Two houses in Plymouth, belonging to Mr. Venn, of the Council, valued each at 200*l.*, sold together for 53*l.* A house in town, rated at 200*l.*, the property of Mr. Dowdy, was sold three times within two years; on the first occasion for 23*l.*; on the second for 63*l.*; and finally for 6*l.* 8*s.* 5*d.*"

I beg also to call attention to the prospects of agriculture as regarded labour in Montserrat. It was stated in that blue book that the wages were reduced so low that the ordinary rate was only fivepence and one-fifth of a penny per day, and notwithstanding that reduction, the report states that—

> "Small as that sum is, there are only eight estates of the thirty-nine in the island on which the labourers are settled with punctually."

That—

> "Not less than seventeen sugar estates have during the course of the last year been either thrown up, or the cultivation on them has been greatly reduced."

I see, Sir, that the House is tired of these small details; but looking at the important statements contained in this blue book of Montserrat, which had been received at the Colonial Office as far back as the 5th of April, and which had never been presented to the Committee at all, I think that the most resolute free-trader cannot wish to see wages reduced below fivepence and one-fifth per day. The summing up of the whole was this:—

> "In this island, in which I believe wages have long been below the rates of other colonies, being only 5½*d.* a day or 2*s.* 2*d.* a week, of five days, that is 6*l.* 3*s.* per annum, together with the advantage of provision ground and medical attendance, we are still far from being in a condition, under existing practice and management, of being able to compete with slave colonies."

If we are *proximi*, it is still *longo intervallo;* and he says that they cannot compete—

> "until, in fact, the wages of the free labourer shall be reduced to a par with the necessary subsistence of he slave."

Now, that is the evidence of the Governor of Montserrat. Well, I ask the House whether that is not a paper which we ought to have had before us? Yet that was kept back, and no explanation offered for withholding it. At the same time, as was admitted by the hon. Gentleman, the report of Mr. Stipendiary Strutt was laid before them because they were deliberating upon these resolutions. That is, Sir, my case. This was evidence which told not against me, nor against those who voted with me. The hon. Gentleman seems to me to forget that we were called together to deliberate upon the condition of the West Indian colonies, the Mauritius, and the East Indies. He seems to think that the proceedings of the Committee were after all but a struggle between two political parties, each trying for mastery, and not caring what became of the wretched beings that are placed under our protection. Well, Sir, did the right hon. Gentleman say there was any factious spirit on the part of the Committee? Will he not do us the justice to say that we met him frankly and fairly? Every Member of that Committee—the hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxford University, the hon. Member for Liverpool, my noble Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, and, above all, my hon. Friend the Member for Droitwich, who came, as well as Lord G. Manners, at a great sacrifice of personal feelings to attend the Committee upon that occasion—they all attended that Committee, and had no mental reservations with the right hon. Gentleman opposite, for they frankly entered upon the inquiry from a really anxious wish to learn what the impressions were that were made upon the minds of each individual Member. Well, then, I say we were not dealt fairly with in respect to these matters. I speak now not as a Committee-man, but I say the West Indian Colonies, the Mauritius, and those mighty interests connected with those places, were not dealt fairly with by this evidence being kept back. There was, too, ample time afforded for the preparation of those documents. We met, as I have before stated, on Thursday, the 4th of May, and we adjourned until the 9th of May following. On Tuesday, the 9th of May, we met again, when it was agreed upon that we should adjourn again for nine days until the 18th May. But what had happened in the interval? We had met on Thursday, the 4th May. On Friday, the 5th May, I came down here for the purpose of moving an address for more papers. The hon. Gentleman opposite will no doubt speak to the truth of this statement which I am how making. The hon. Gentleman was not in his place, when I came down as Chairman of the Committee to move this address, which I considered to be almost a matter of form, for these papers were very much wanted. I spoke to the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Indian Board, whom I do not now see in his place, respecting those documents. The time, however, went by when I could move for them as an unopposed return. The hon. Gentleman apologised to me for not being in his place, and he undertook to move the address himself. It was an address for copies of certain despatches received from the Governors of the West Indies and the Mauritius. I left the House and did not return. The hon. Gentleman forgot to move for the papers, as he had promised, on Friday, the 5th May. On Monday the 8th May, he apologised to me for his forgetfulness, but assured me that no time was lost, for he had instantly set about preparing an answer to the return. Well, upon the same day a question was asked the hon. Gentleman by Mr. P. Miles, who was a Member of the Committee. He wished to know whether the Government were prepared to lay upon the table of the House copies of the latest despatches received from all the Governors of the West Indian colonies before the report of the West Indian Committee came under discussion in the House. The hon. Gentleman then undertook to say that a very important despatch from those colonies should be laid upon the table of the House before the discussion referred to came on, and that papers connected with the subject were already in preparation. We were then deliberating upstairs. We afterwards adjourned to the 18th for the purpose of carrying our resolutions. I will admit that when Earl Grey, on the 14th of April, had answered the despatch received on the 27th March, from Sir Charles Grey, that though the document itself, was emblazoned by certain minutes and remarkable memoranda, it did not follow that it should occur to the noble Lord's mind that this despatch had never been laid before the Committee. But what answer has the Colonial Office to give me now? On the 8th of May I was assured that the address had been virtually moved for on Friday the 5th of May, which at last produced the return. Now, Sir, I want to know how Earl Grey acquits himself, or how the Under Secretary of the Colonies acquits himself, when, in pursuance of an order of this House, the notice of the address which had been voted was sent to the Colonial Office requiring all the papers connected with this subject to be laid before them? It was the duty of Earl Grey—a duty which he could not escape from—to decide what those despatches were of which copies were to be made, and what those were from which merely extracts were required. I want to know, when he saw that this despatch to which I have referred was so important, and that it had these four minutes on it—that it had been laid before him on the 9th of May, and was then to be sent back to him—when it was supposed to have been presented to the Committee on the 30th of March—how I ask, was it that he did not say, "Oh gracious! how is it that this despatch has never been sent before the Committee? Whose fault is this? What clerk has committed the error? Who has been guilty of this great negligence?" It might be expected that an English Minister, in particular, would have expressed deep regret for the negligence of the clerks in the Colonial Office—that he would say, "I know they are preparing the documents, and that they will be printed and laid before the Committee. I know that the Chairman has proposed a duty of 2*d.* per lb. on foreign sugar, and 1*d.* per lb. on colonial sugar; and I am aware also that Sir Charles Grey proposes a duty on colonial sugar of 9*s.* 4*d.* per cwt., and 18*s.* 8*d.* on foreign; whereas the Chairman of the Committee recommends a duty of 10*s.* on colonial sugar, and 20*s.* on foreign." But, no: when the hon. Gentleman was asked if there was any further important evidence to lay before the Committee, he was mute—he was dumb—not a word was said, not a whisper, with regard to Governor Grey's despatch, which was of the most vital importance, and the existence of which he must at the time have been aware of. The Committee met again on the 18th of May, and they again adjourned to the 23rd; and on that day, or thirteen days after, Earl Grey and the hon. Gentleman must, at all events, have been made acquainted with the errors of their underlings of the Colonial Office, in not having communicated the despatch containing the important opinions of Sir C. Grey: the Committee were still in ignorance of the arrival of any such despatch. The Committee adjourned for four days more, to consider their verdict; but I think, if I mistake not, more inquiries were made in this House for despatches from the West Indies, in the interim. The right hon. Member for the University of Cambridge, and the hon. Member for Liverpool, voted against the proposition for 10*s.* and 20*s.* duties, and also against the proposition of the hon. Gentleman behind me. Their own proposition had been rejected, but the question still remained open for another vote. A differential duty of 20*s.* on foreign sugar, and 10*s.* on colonial, for a period of six years, was then proposed by a free-trader, and one who had previously opposed my resolution. And what took place after that? Why, I find that on the 16th of May, the hon. Member for the University of Cambridge came down to the House, and asked the hon. Gentleman opposite if he had received any despatch recently from Jamaica, as he was very anxious to have some information with respect to the state of that colony. And what was the answer of the hon. Gentleman? Not, "Oh! good heavens, we have made a great mistake; we discovered seven days ago an omission had been made in supplying information to the Committee. Here is an important despatch from Sir Charles Grey, in which he says, if a greater differential duty on foreign and colonial sugars does not immediately take place, the greater part of the plantations in Jamaica must go out of cultivation. Nothing will do but a duty of 1*d.* on colonial, and 2*d.* per lb. on foreign." The hon. Gentleman said nothing of the kind; and I think he must really have the very shortest memory that can be conceived, if he did not at that time remember that Governor Grey's despatch had not been laid before us, and that the House, as well as the Committee, were ignorant of it. And, Sir, I must again repeat my question on this head. I want to know how does the hon. Member account for keeping the House and the Committee in that state of ignorance upon a matter of so much importance? There was still a last resource. The Committee, on the morning of the 25th of May, met for the last time, and they threw out the 10th Resolution proposed by the right hon. Member for the University of Cambridge, and supported the Member for Liverpool; and then nothing, no alternative, remained for them but to agree to the proposition of Sir Thomas Birch, for a duty of 10*s.* per cwt. on colonial sugar for six years, or to retire and not vote. But the right hon. Gentleman again came down to the House and agitated the question, and poked the Members on the Treasury bench for further information. But the hon. Under Secretary still kept his prudent peace. In answer to questions, whether any later accounts had been received from the West Indies than those which had been laid before the Committee, and, if so, whether the Government were prepared to lay them before the House; the hon. Gentleman said, that he did not receive any information by the packet which arrived two or three days before, but he expected to receive further information by the next packet, which he would lay on the table. But, in point of fact, he did not keep back information which the right hon. Gentleman wanted to have; and did he not know that the decision of the Committee was very nicely weighed in the balance? Well then, Sir, I am here to show, and my purpose is to show, that these great possessions of the British Crown have not had a fair trial; and that the Government, whose business it is to guard and protect them, have acted towards them as if they were some hostile suitors or guilty criminals. If there has been a systematic suppression of the truth, with regard to the state of the West Indies, I feel bound to say that I do not think the hon. Gentleman, or the right hon. President of the Board of Trade, if he ever knew of the existence of the despatch before it came to light, were parties to such a systematic suppression of the truth; but what I complain of is, that the Members of the Colonial Office did not deal as frankly with those who were disposed to deal frankly with them. The hon. Member must have known that there was evidence in his office of a most vital and important character, and that he held it back from those men whose opinions he asked for on a subject with which that evidence was intimately connected. Sir, I feel that I am charged with a great duty in defending the interests of the West Indian colonies, but I will say nothing of that. When, however, it is said that I charged Earl Grey—whose high character has been so justly spoken of—with fraud, I deny that I ever did so. What I said was, that despatches containing most important information were withheld by the authorities of the Colonial Office for political purposes. I repeat that I did not impute fraud to the noble Lord; but, Sir, I conceive I have a right here in my place, defending the interests of my country, as a private and independent Member of Parliament, to arraign the highest Ministers of the State; and I will ever do so when I think they forfeit their title to the confidence of those who placed the British colonies under their guardianship. Neither, Sir, do I impute fraud to the hon. Under Secretary; but I must dispute the hon. Member's title to possessing a good memory. He certainly lacks not sagacity; but it is most extraordinary, that when questioned on the subject, on the 5th of April, he should forget a despatch which was stated to have been minuted to be laid before the Committee by Mr. Cox and himself on the 27th of the previous month, and by Earl Grey on the 30th, with the same purpose. I made no use of the word "fraud;" but one who I believe has not been considered to sin against good taste in the way I have been considered to have sinned, made use, I believe, of these words. Mr. Burke, who made a great speech upon conciliation, with regard to the British American colonial question, said, in reference to trickery, policy, and statesmen, that—

> "A refined policy ever has been the parent of confusion, and ever will be, so long as the world endures. Plain, honest intention, which may as easily be discovered as fraud will surely be detected at last, is, let me say, of no mean force in the government of mankind."

LORD JOHN RUSSELL: I cannot but think that my hon. Friend is entitled to an answer to the questions that he put to the noble Lord; and I rise for the purpose, not of inflicting a long speech on the subject of despatches of September and October last from Governor Higginson, but, if possible, to get the noble Lord to answer the questions that my hon. Friend has put to him. The noble Lord, as I understood him, originally said that a despatch had been kept back from the Committee of which he was Chairman; and the hon. Gentleman then came down and read certain minutes from the Colonial Office, directing that that despatch should be laid before the Committee on the 30th of March. On Friday night last the noble Lord said that those minutes must have been concocted; and he ended his speech with the words that he has just now again quoted from Mr. Burke, to the effect that fraud will always in the end be detected. My hon. Friend, in answering this charge, produced certain minutes; and the noble Lord, in reference to them, says that, "if these minutes and memorandums were not got up subsequently," that is, if they were not a forgery—if they were not a fraud—on the part of either Mr. Cox, Mr. Hawes, Mr. Elliot, or Lord Grey—

> "If they were not got up subsequently to his examination of the 5th of April, he was troubled with the shortest memory since the days of green-

bag notoriety, when Theodore Majocchi gave his answer of *Non mi ricordo*. That was the charge I made, and the hon. Gentleman may take his option whether or not, after these various discussions and various minutes to which he affixed his name, he, on the 5th of April, could not remember the receipt of any despatch of an important nature; that he could not on the 5th of April recollect, notwithstanding three separate discussions on the subject of that despatch and its importance, that any important despatch, or that any despatch connected with the agriculture and social state of Jamaica, had been received. That is the charge I make against the hon. Gentleman, and I care nothing whether he makes his defence against the one or the other of the horns of the dilemma on which I place him, and from which he cannot escape."

That was the charge of the noble Lord—the charge which he made and repeated on Friday night. Now, my hon. Friend makes his statement—his plain unadorned explanation with regard to the facts which have taken place; and he asks the noble Lord either to prove the charges which he then made, or withdraw them, or else to assent to the appointment of a Committee, in order that their truth may be sifted. Now, what does the noble Lord do? He has favoured us, as on many other occasions, with a long speech on a great number of things; but with regard to that question of my hon. Friend on a matter regarding his character and his honour, it is impossible for me at this moment to say what are the opinions of the noble Lord. With regard, indeed, to the minutes, the noble Lord said in the beginning of his speech, that the statement of my hon. Friend in reference to them was correct; but the noble Lord seemed to imply the contrary in other parts of his speech, and I want to know whether this charge of concocting the minutes—whether this charge which he has made against my hon. Friend and Lord Grey, and those other two Gentlemen, is withdrawn or not? The next question I wish to ask is, whether the noble Lord continues to make this charge, the purport of which is perfectly intelligible, that unless the minutes were concocted, that then Mr. Hawes was troubled with the shortest memory that was known "since the days of green bags and of Theodore Majocchi, of *Non mi ricordo* notoriety." Every body knows the character of that person to whom the noble Lord compares my hon. Friend—that he endeavoured by false answers to mislead those by whom he was examined. My hon. Friend made certain answers to the questions, as he understood them, of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge. These answers were perfectly correct. He stated that an important despatch had been received, and that it was preparing for the Committee. He may have misunderstood the question of the right hon. Gentleman. That may be so, and on a subsequent day he applied to the right hon. Gentleman to know what his meaning in asking those questions was; and it then turned out that my hon. Friend had misunderstood the meaning of the right hon. Gentleman. But I am sure the right hon. Gentleman will be the first to see the difference—as every one must see it—between mistaking the meaning of a question, and a voluntary intention to mislead the Committee by false answers. Now I want to know whether the noble Lord does withdraw these charges—first, that the minutes were concocted long after the date affixed to them; and, secondly, whether he maintains the charge implied by his assertion that the memory of my hon. Friend "is the shortest that has been known since the days of green bags and Theodore Majocchi, of *Non mi ricordo* notoriety;" in other words, that the answers of my hon. Friend were given with the intention directly of misleading the Committee. If the noble Lord perseveres in either of these charges, my hon. Friend wishes for a Committee to inquire into them; and I think that my hon. Friend is quite right in demanding an answer upon these points from the noble Lord. If the noble Lord says that he is convinced that he was in error when he made them, then the matter may rest; but to evade the questions, and to refuse to give my hon. Friend any answer at all, is, I think, hardly a fit course to take towards a Member of this House.

Mr. DISRAELI rose to address the House, but was met with loud cries of "Question!"

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no question before the House upon which the hon. Member can address it.

Mr. FORBES MACKENZIE moved that the House do adjourn.

Mr. DISRAELI: Sir, I had hoped that my noble Friend (Lord G. Bentinck) had spoken long enough to convey to this House his meaning, and that it was unnecessary that he should rise again. If the noble Lord has not conveyed what he meant to convey to the House, he may despair of doing so in any future address. I wish to make an explanation in the first place with respect to the Under Secretary for the Colonies. When I said on a former occasion that it was not the intention of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn, that his words should convey an offensive meaning to the hon. Gentleman, I said what was my own impression at the time. But the noble Lord the First Minister rose and said, that the important question before us was, that the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn had accused the Under Secretary, and his friends in the Colonial Office, of committing a political fraud. Now the hon. Gentleman, who on that occasion (Friday night) rose after the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn, in some excitement, never alluded to that point. He rose in consequence of what he said was the charge against Her Majesty's Ministers, of having suppressed important despatches. It was only subsequently, that the Under Secretary—he would not say by an afterthought—brought the matter to the present point. But now, to-night, the noble Lord puts that forward as the most important subject before us. Here is the dilemma quoted by the First Minister, either that the Colonial Office must have concocted this minute, or else that the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary must be troubled with one of the shortest memories in the world. Why, Sir, I certainly believe that the Under Secretary must at the time have been gifted with the shortest memory in the world. [Mr. Hawes: Prove it.] Well, if I am obliged to do it it is not very difficult, because the hon. Gentleman declared that he could not produce this despatch, not having received it. But I totally deny the conclusion of the noble Lord, and I deny that any specific charge of such a nature as the noble Lord has described has been brought against the hon. Gentleman. I take the objection which has been put forward so elaborately by the noble Lord the First Minister, of shortness of memory, not as a charge against the hon. Gentleman. In impressing upon the House the nature of the evidence given by the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary, my noble Friend said, that if he was not gifted with the shortest memory in the world, he must have been cognisant of the despatch. My noble Friend does not wish to evade his charge against the hon. Gentleman and the Government. He does charge the Government with systematic suppression of information—suppression of information which they imagine tells in favour of the opinions of my noble Friend, and adverse to those which they profess. That is the charge. If that be an unparliamentary charge—if that be an unconstitutional charge—I want to know what is the use of a House of Commons? Why are you here to exercise criticism upon the administration of public affairs, if, under such circumstances as these, you are to be stopped from such a declaration? The noble Lord asks, if my noble Friend persists in the odious charge of forgery of the minutes upon the documents? To this I have to say, in the first place, that that charge never was made; but if it was it never could have been more completely withdrawn than it was in the first instance. My noble Friend said that the House could not doubt, after the statement they had heard, that the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary had correctly stated the circumstances. What more could be said or required? For myself, I am the last man to treat the hon. Gentleman with disrespect; and if I had used any words unintentionally which might be construed as having such a tendency, there is no apology I should not be happy to make. But I am sure that there was an entire misapprehension of the meaning of my noble Friend; and I am sure I am only expressing his opinion—although I have no authority to say so—when I state that there was a misapprehension of his meaning, and that he has to-night decidedly and publicly expressed that he does not doubt for a moment the history of the despatches told in the statement of the hon. Under Secretary, which statement no one could for a moment doubt. But I do not wish to evade the real question, which is not a personal question. It is a charge against the Administration of systematic suppression of information which told against the policy they upheld. Clearing the question, then, of all personal matter, let me remind this House of two or three very important circumstances. Let me put the case quietly before it. All this discussion arises because a most important despatch was not brought before the Committee on Sugar and Coffee Planting, that being a despatch from the Governor of one of the most important islands in the West Indies, who counselled in that despatch a protective duty of 10*s.* upon colonial sugar. What are the facts? Was that despatch put before the Committee? Or is it contended that it ought not to have been produced before that Committee? On the contrary, the very defence of the Government is, that orders were given that it should be placed before that Committee.

It never was put before the Committee. In the opinion of the Chairman of that Committee, that despatch was the most important document that could be submitted to their consideration; and when the Chairman, obtaining that document, but obtaining it too late, expresses his sense of the grievance, then the Government turn round and say that they are charged with fraud. If the case stood alone, as I have now set it forth, it would justify any Member of Parliament in bringing forward this question. But it does not stand alone. There was another despatch from an important colony—not only this from Jamaica, which the Government acknowledged was most important — but there was another despatch from Trinidad, which also, by some extraordinary circumstances, was never placed before that Committee. The case, then, of Jamaica was not an isolated case; it had that of Trinidad for a companion. But unfortunately there was still another colony besides these—besides Jamaica and Trinidad—and that was Berbice, which was implicated in this matter. So there were three important despatches containing matters highly essential in assisting the Committee in forming a report which was not placed before them. There are, then, three despatches acknowledged by the Government not to have been produced, but which ought to have been produced. That circumstance alone is a legitimate ground for any hon. Member to come forward, with a view of drawing attention to the subject. My noble Friend referred to another case of the utmost importance, and I must draw the attention of the hon. the Under Secretary to it, because my noble Friend tells you frankly that he thinks there is a systematic attempt to suppress or to pervert the truth; and he has given you some evidence why he thinks there has been a systematic attempt to suppress the truth. Here is a case which, I think, impugns the conduct of the noble Lord the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and a case which I think, therefore, he ought to meet. It is a simple case; it requires no special pleading. I shall put it simply before the House, and I defy any man, whatever his political predilections, or on whatsoever side of the House he may sit, not to feel that it is a case which requires explanation. Be it observed, too, that all this was going on at the very same time when those despatches were withheld from the Committee. The matter refers to a debate which took place on February 7, in another place; and a noble Lord, speaking in that debate, wished to convey to the minds of that assembly, and through them to the minds of the people of this country, a very important impression, namely, that we were not to despair even of the state of Jamacia, for that new social circumstances had developed themselves in that colony; that resident proprietors, of a new race, were, since the Act of Emancipation, investing a vast amount of capital in those colonies; that these were the men and this was the system to which England must look for the regeneration of Jamaica; and the noble Lord, speaking upon the evidence to which I am about to refer, addressing that assembly, and through them addressing the country, did hold out these circumstances as an inducement to the further investment of capital in that colony. This is a most important subject. I will not misrepresent the noble Lord; I will read his words. The noble Lord said—

> "A very great change was going on in the West Indies at the present moment. Among many documents which had passed through his hands connected with the state of these colonies, he was very much struck with one which he had received the other day from a number of planters in the western part of Jamaica, and who stated that they had invested capital to the extent of not less than 142,000*l.* in plantations in the colony; and they added, what was a most remarkable fact, that, with one exception, they had all purchased or leased their plantations since emancipation."

This extract from the speech of the noble Lord having been once read, I do not wish to read the whole of it again; but he went on to say, that these circumstances showed what a change of system was in progress in that island; and he then observed, that—

> "So far from believing that the prospects of Jamaica were bad, he was not aware of any part of the British dominions in which there was so favourable a prospect for the investment of capital at this moment as in Jamaica."

I now come to the document which the noble Lord the Secretary of State for the Colonies quoted in his speech, which document the noble Lord described as most interesting and important, and which, on the 7th of February, he used to influence the opinions of the assembly he was addressing in another place—that Jamaica was not in a suffering position, but was to be saved by a new order of planters, who had invested money to a great amount since emancipation —and that, so great were the changes which had taken place, that investment of capital in Jamaica had become a profitable enterprise. Here is the document. It is a memorial to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and it runs thus:—

> "My Lord—We pray your earnest attention to the following facts:—We, the undersigned, are the owners of 19, and the lessees of 13 sugar estates in the west end of the island of Jamaica, on which properties we employ daily an average of 2,898 labourers, who represent families numbering 14,490 people, lately redeemed from slavery. Our sugar estates, 32 in number, are expected to make this year 2,796 hogsheads of sugar, and 1,354 puncheons of rum, which will cost us, by accurate computation, 60,315*l*. 13*s*. 5*d*. We have no hope of realising more than 15*l*. per hogshead, and 14*l*. per puncheon (the *maximum* price of the market at present), at which rate our produce will bring 60,896*l*., leaving a balance over our expenditure of 580*l*. 6*s*. 7*d*. to go against 6 per cent, the common rate of interest which money bears in the colony, and which on 60,315*l*. 13*s*. 5*d*., would be 3,618*l*. 18*s*. 9*d*. Our capital invested on these 32 sugar estates in live stock and implements of husbandry, amounts, in live stock, to 32,094*l*.; in implements, to 14,630*l*., upon which wear and tear of capital we received no interest whatever. The 19 sugar estates that we own cost us 95,784*l*., and we pay a rental for the 13 other estates of 3,110*l*. per annum, which sunk capital is likewise wholly profitless."

The memorialists go on to say, that they do not expect the British nation will abandon the principles of free trade for the sake of affording them protection. Now, the noble Lord, using this document to convince the country that a new race of men were investing capital in Jamaica, and calling this document most important and admirable, and one which ought to be read, entirely concealed the paragraph which I will now read, and which contains the object of the whole memorial:—

> "It will be evident from the facts stated that we cannot cultivate for another year; indeed we have not the means, unaided, of taking off the present crop."

These, then, are the men who invested 142,000*l*. of capital in Jamaica since the Emancipation Act; and the noble Lord, in addressing the most august assembly in the world, induces them to suppose that the investment of money in Jamaica is profitable —so profitable, it appears that they had not "the means of taking off the present crop." The memorialists go on to say—

> "And the British West India merchants are now unable to assist us, and of course disinclined, when there is no hope of profit, or even of recovering their advances."

Now mark this:—

> "If we, being proprietors and lessees, living on and managing our own properties, brought up to tropical agriculture, and availing ourselves of every practical improvement, have only such a result to exhibit as is set forth in the statement of these facts, the inference is conclusive that the position of the absentee proprietor or mortgagee, represented by paid agencies, is still more deplorable."

I now ask this House, was Her Majesty's Secretary of State justified in using that memorial—which, by the way, he never produced—to show that there was a new investment of capital to a great amount in Jamaica by new colonists, new proprietors, who had invested 142,000*l*. already in that colony—had he a right, I say, to state these facts, and refer to them as a proof that the renovation of Jamaica was taking place, and that it now held out a desirable prospect for the employment of British skill and capital, when that very memorial which he held in his hand at the time, but which he did not show, proved the exact reverse? I would say more. I would ask how to describe that Minister who thus uses a document which comes into his hands in virtue of his high official position, who mutilates that document for his purpose, and who uses the statements it contains as corroborative of his views, when, in fact, they were intended to confute them? I ask them whether my noble Friend, having evidence of the fact that three important despatches were never laid before that Committee until after they had come to their conclusion—knowing this fact, being also cognisant that almost at the same time the Secretary of State for the Colonies was making these monstrous representations in another place as to the state of Jamaica—which representations, made at any other time than one of commercial depression and distress, might have been the means and the inducement for the investment of enormous sums on the faith of them—I ask, I say, was not my noble Friend justified in feeling that there was a systematic effort to suppress or to pervert the truth? There is a case to which I shall refer more slightly, but still it is illustrative of the system. Lord Grey, in another place, after reading certain statements, as coinciding with the views of the Government, which were contained in a despatch from Colonel Higginson, the Governor of Antigua, said that every line of that despatch was worthy the attention of the House. But he never showed it. He read every passage which supported the system of which he is a most able advocate; and it of course makes a great impression upon the Members of a popular assembly when a Minister reads despatches—which they don't see—as confirmatory of his opinions; and when he tells them that those despatches are able and admirable, and that there is not a line of them which is not worthy their attention, it is no wonder that they take it all in. Now, this is the passage which the noble Lord did not read :—

> "It must be conceded that, for obvious reasons, free-grown sugar can never yield so lucrative a return as that produced by foreign slaves."

Now, why did not the noble Lord read that particular passage, if every line of the despatch from which he was quoting was worthy the special attention of his hearers? If this had been the single and solitary instance of the kind which had occurred, you might have talked of accident, and, though I do not think that a Minister of his rank ought to dress up a case, yet the matter might have passed over. But when we find that there is a Committee sitting, from which three most important despatches have been withheld—when we find on the 7th of February the same Minister making a statement of a character to attract and induce the investment of British skill and capital in Jamaica—when the very document which he held in his hand, and waved before their eyes—but which they don't see, proves that Jamaica is in a state of bankruptcy—when we find the same Minister reading a despatch, every line of which he says is worthy of attention, and yet omitting the only line which tells against him, then I ask is it not conclusive of a fixed determination to prevent information, so far as the Government is concerned, from being circulated against that system of which they are the upholders? Is such a conclusion so uncharitable to arrive at, or so unworthy of the position and duties of a representative of the people in this House? I know of no case stronger than the despatch from Trinidad, moved for by the hon. Member for Montrose last Session. It was well known when Parliament met this year that that despatch had been moved for by the hon. Member in the October or November preceding. [Sir G. GREY: The Parliament did not meet until November.] I am speaking from memory; but the merits of the question do not depend upon whether it was in October or November. But when the new Parliament met in the autumn, this despatch was moved for, and was never produced until the end of February. [Mr. HAWES: It was laid on the table at the meeting of Parliament, as the hon. Gentleman would find if he referred to the Votes.] At any rate, it was not laid on the table of the House until after the sugar debates of February were over. [Mr. HAWES dissented, and crossed the House with a paper, apparently to show the hon. Member the date when the despatch had been produced.] But this return speaks of law ordinances and rule, and what I am quoting from is not about law ordinances and rule. However, it is not of the slightest importance as far as the argument is concerned, because what I say is this—that those despatches were not brought in in time to influence the debate; and if the despatch was moved for in November, why was it not produced before? I believe that in that debate that despatch was not known to anybody but the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State, whom it might have influenced; but if it had been known to the great body of the House, would seven months have been allowed to write that famous despatch beginning "It is sad and painful to behold;" and which gives a description almost of the dissolution of society in the colony? It is all very well for the Government to take this tone, and for the noble Lord to say that the real question for the House to decide is, whether the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary has or has not been guilty of forging minutes. No one, I believe, intended to accuse him of it. But, the only speaker whom he could have intended to accuse cleared himself of the imputation an hour and a half ago. I want to know, can the noble Lord clear the Government from the charge of systematic suppression? The country must decide upon the broad facts. I say nothing of the blue books which were not produced; but here are three despatches which the Government acknowledge have not been produced—which were most important to be produced—which the Government themselves say were not only intended to be produced, but were elements of the greatest importance to assist the Committee in arriving at a just decision; and here is the fact, the head of a department of the Government is at the same time carrying on an apparently enormous perversion of the truth. The hon. Gentleman shakes his head, but these are matters of fact. Will the hon. Gentleman or any one else deny the statement that on the 7th of February the Secretary of State for the Colonies, referring to the memorial, which he held, I believe, in his hand, and which he said was a most interesting and important document he had received from proprietors in Jamaica, did convey to those he was addressing an impression directly the reverse of that which the memorialists themselves attempted to convey? Is that so or not? It is not an affair of opinion; it is a matter of fact. If he can tell me that we have been all dreaming—that Lord Grey never made that speech at all on the 7th of February—that he never said he had seen and was in possession of an interesting and important document or memorial from proprietors in Jamaica, showing that they had laid out great sums in the purchase of estates since emancipation, that they were a new race of men investing capital in that colony, that they were residents, that these were the elements of regeneration for Jamaica, that under these circumstances Jamaica held out for Englishmen a most desirable investment for capital, while at the same time the very memorial he held in his hand, and only partially quoted, proved these memorialists to be bankrupt—if you can prove that all these things never occurred, and all these statements were never made, then I grant that, by bringing about this discussion, you have done yourselves some good. We are the representatives of the people; and many of our constituents might, by that statement of Lord Grey, have been induced to invest their capital in Jamaica. I see a smile of derision on the Treasury bench at the idea, no doubt, of anybody investing capital in Jamaica! But nothing can be more monstrous than the fact that, on the 7th of February, the Secretary for the Colonies should recommend an investment of capital in Jamaica—a recommendation which might have been attended with still greater mischief than the suppression of documents, and which, if acted upon, might have involved the colony in still wider ruin. No doubt this was part of the system; and now the Government complains of unfounded charges of fraud being brought against them, because we, in the discharge of our duty, call the attention of the House to the fact that we believe there is an inclination, if not a determination, on the part of that Government, to suppress the truth for the purpose of bolstering up their system. If such be our conviction, are we not justified in making the charge in the face of the House? And I now ask, is that charge mere empty words? My noble Friend brings forward an important fact, and that fact, which is the foundation of all the noble Lord's suspicions, is admitted by yourselves. If you had said, "The noble Lord has had the bad taste to make a charge against the Government, accusing us of withholding a despatch from the Committee, though if he had only looked into the proceedings of the Committee he would have found that the despatch was produced at the right moment; but instead of that he has come down in a rough and inconsiderate way and accused us of a fraud, when, in reality, we lost no time in producing that despatch, which he might have seen under his own nose;" if you could say that, there might be some excuse for your indignation. But when you come forward pleading a fault— ["No, no!"] Why, your only defence is this, that it is a blunder and not a crime. That is the defence of the Government. I dare say the noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonies, who is a theorist of the most pronounced and determined character, may not be aware, so coloured is his mind by the abstract opinions that have so long ruled him, of the bias which, unfortunately for the country, sways him upon these questions. I am never unwilling to believe, on occasions of this kind, that many things which look suspicious may be explained; and I would even be disposed to take the most courteous view of all the circumstances connected with the administration of an office where there is a great deal to do. But when I find Ministers, who are meeting charges brought forward against them, obliged to commence their defence by saying that they are guilty, and then going on to say that it is preposterous to make statements of this kind; that we ought to consider their bearing on the character of the House, and their effect upon the country, wholly independent of their own wounded feelings; then I think that they place themselves in such ridiculous position as Ministers never placed themselves in before. Of course nothing can be more natural to the Government than to deprecate discussion on such a subject as this. To a Ministry inquiry is always chargeable with bad taste. It is an outrage on the delicate sentiments of humanity for a Member to get up and ask a question which it is inconvenient to answer. But the question we ask must be answered. And I believe that the statement we make will produce an effect elsewhere. That mysterious but important part of the world "elsewhere," to which the hon. Gentleman opposite refers, will, I believe, meditate on what we have said. "Elsewhere" will say, that after all your statements and speeches and passionate ebullutions, there are some facts of a suspicious character that ought to be explained. "Elsewhere" will remember that three despatches of great importance were not produced before the Committee on the Sugar and Coffee Duties. "Elsewhere" will not forget that the Secretary of State for the Colonies, on the 7th of February, held out Jamaica as a most desirable investment for Her Majesty's lieges, on the authority of papers and evidence which he held in his hand. These are facts you may deny; but I have that opinion of the good sense and proper spirit of "elsewhere" as to believe that, whether right or wrong, they will never consider a Member of Parliament in error who attempts honestly to do his duty in order to discover the truth, and who is not afraid to impugn the conduct of a Minister, however influential his position, however high his honour, or however great his pedigree.

Mr. V. SMITH thought the House had some reason to complain that the hon. Gentleman who had just set down, and the noble Lord, should have deviated so much from the original discussion of the evening, viz., the personal charges brought against Members of Her Majesty's Government. He contended that the commencement of this debate was the statement made by the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hawes) on a purely personal question; and it was solely because it was a personal question that he was permitted to proceed. But how had the noble Lord and the hon. Gentleman opposite met that personal question? It was of immense importance that that House should preserve the dignity of their debates; and if charges were brought against a Member, and especially against a Minister of the Crown, it was the duty of the House to institute inquiry into those charges—to acquit the individual charged if found innocent—or to take steps against him if the charges were borne out. The noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) had not denied the utterance of the words used by him when he charged Gentlemen in the Colonial Office with concocting a minute. If there was meaning in words, the noble Lord had charged Mr. Cox and Mr. Elliot, as well as Mr. Hawes and Lord Grey, with having concocted a minute; in plain words, the charge was one of forgery. The hon. Member for Buckinghamshire said the noble Lord had withdrawn that charge; but if he did so he certainly did it in a most unhandsome manner. His words were, "Nobody doubts that the hon. Gentleman has made that minute correctly." Indeed, he thought the noble Lord, by his manner, rather meant to bring a fresh charge, than to withdraw one. That charge was brought against men employed in the Colonial Office of as high character and honour as any in that House; and he hoped, therefore, that the noble Lord would withdraw the charge he had so rashly made. Then the next charge was, that he had placed the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary on the horns of a dilemma—that he had a very short memory—and that nothing like what he had said had occurred since the days of Theodore Majocchi. The hon. Member for Buckinghamshire, in order to take off the point of the charge, said, he believed that his hon. Friend the Under Secretary for the Colonies had a very short memory: that was a very different thing, however, from what was said by the noble Lord. It was a simple enough matter to accuse a person of want of memory. The hon. Member himself (Mr. Disraeli) had been twice in the course of the speech he had just delivered convicted of a bad memory with reference to the delivery of two despatches; but no one on that account ever dreamed of comparing the hon Member to Theodore Majocchi, who was the greatest liar that ever lived. Indeed, so notorious was that man in this respect that whenever it was wished to convey the idea of a great liar, the name of Theodore Majocchi was used. Now, he held that these were serious charges brought forward by the noble Lord, and that it was necessary for the dignity of the House that something more should be done regarding them, and that they should not be evaded as had been done by the hon. Gentleman and that noble Lord, who said he had brought a political and not a personal charge. Let the House hear whether the noble Lord would withdraw or support the charges he had made, and then they would enter upon the fresh questions raised by the hon. Member (Mr. Disraeli), viz., whether there had been any systematic suppression of information on the part of the Colonial Office.

Sir J. PAKINGTON thought the right hon. Gentleman who had just resumed his seat, and the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) who spoke earlier in the evening, were attempting to divert the House from that which seemed to him to be the real question, and the most important question at issue. A grave charge of misconduct had been brought against the Colonial Office; and he regretted, that when the noble Lord at the head of the Government rose, he did not rather address himself to this more serious charge, than to the imputation upon the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of having falsified the minutes on the despatch, which charge he believed had never been made, but what was put by the noble Lord the Member for Lynn as an alternative. That was his impression on Friday night; but he thought the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, had by no means done justice to what fell from his noble Friend at the commencement of his speech that evening, when he distinctly stated, that after what had fallen from the Under Secretary, that he could not make any imputation upon him with regard to the dates upon the despatch. He thought that night to have satisfied the hon. Gentleman; and, indeed, the hon. Gentleman took off his hat when the statement was made, which is the usual sign in this House of a Gentleman being satisfied. [Mr. Hawes: That was to the hon. Member for Buckingham—not to the noble Lord.] He alluded to that which he saw the hon. Gentleman do when the noble Lord sat down. So far as he had taken part in these matters, he could assure the hon. Gentleman that he had not the slightest hesitation in saying, that neither he nor the noble Lord who was at the head of the Colonial Office were capable of such a thing. He never entertained the suspicion, nor did he now believe, that the hon. Gentleman was capable of coming before the Committee and making any other statement in answer to a question than that which he believed to be true. But having stated that, he must revert to what he felt was the real question before the House, and to which the Members of the Government ought to address themselves—the charge, to use the mildest terms, of great neglect in the Colonial Office. The fact was, that an unfortunate despatch had been received on the 27th of March—that from the 27th to the 30th of March various entries were made upon this despatch, all of them to the same effect, that the despatch ought to be sent to the Committee, but up to that day this despatch never had been laid before the Committee. Here was the simple and important fact. The despatch was now in possession of the House; but how? In return to a Motion made on the 8th of May for copies of all despatches received from the colonial Governors, this despatch was only laid on the table of the House on the 9th of June. Now, he put to the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary this plain and distinct question, which seemed to him not unimportant in its bearing on these matters. Two months had elapsed between the entries made on the despatch, and its appearance before the House. He wanted to know when it was that this mistake was first discovered? They had not yet been told that. When did it come to light that these entries, made so far back as March, had been disregarded and neglected in the Colonial Office? He hoped the hon. Gentleman would give him this information; and he hoped also he would admit—if it was discovered antecedent to its actual production—that it ought then to have been laid before the Committee. On the other hand, if it was not discovered sooner, he thought he had good ground to complain that two months were allowed to pass without this neglect being discovered. He thought this was a serious charge resting upon the administration of the Colonial Office. Then there were other despatches from Governor Light and Governor Lord Harris, all of them of an important nature, and well calculated to have an effect upon the votes of the Members of the Committee. He hoped the hon. Gentleman would feel it incumbent upon himself, as representing the Colonial Office, to vindicate it from what appeared a very serious charge, either of attempt to suppress information, or else of several grave and important blunders.

Sir G. GREY: It is with considerable surprise that I have heard my hon. Friend, who has just addressed the House, charge us who sit on this side with having attempted on this occasion to divert the attention of the House from that which is the real question before it. What is the real question? My hon. Friend, feeling that a charge had been brought against him by the noble Lord, deeply affecting his personal honour, called upon him either to prove or to withdraw it. The noble Lord seems astonished that my hon. Friend should consider the charge he made to affect his personal honour, because he now says the charge he alleged was political and not sordid fraud. As far as affected his honour, the result has proved that the charge of fraud was utterly unfounded, and I believe it was never entertained by any man; still the hon. Gentleman rose to defend himself against the imputation, partly by a temperate, clear, and expressive statement of facts, and partly also by putting it to the noble Lord to reassert the charge, and then either prove or openly withdraw it. What then did the noble Lord do? Did the noble Lord, except in the few words with which he prefaced his speech, ever lead the House to suppose he did not believe in the possibility of the charge being true—that he did not believe the minute had been fraudulently concocted by my noble Friend at the head of the Colonial Office. [Lord G. Bentinck: I did not use the word fraudulently.] The noble Lord did not use the word "fraudulently." I give him credit for that. The charge was, that the minute was concocted—that the minute was thereby calculated to deceive the Committee, the House, and the public. I understand now that the noble Lord (though it was not my impression at the time)—though still abstaining from retracting the charge in the way that I think a man of honour ought to retract it—has assented to the retractation of the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire, and my hon. Friend the Member for Droitwich. I hope, therefore, that the charge is abandoned. But what does my hon. Friend opposite say? He says he does not think the charge was made except as an alternative. Now, what is the alternative? The noble Lord says either the minute was concocted and antedated to deceive the House and the public, or my hon. Friend the Under Secretary, in his evidence, resembled Theodore Majocchi. What is that but saying that the minute was either concocted or antedated? Either the minute was concocted or antedated, or my hon. Friend's was as false as the evidence of Theodore Majocchi. Such is the alternative. The House, I say, has a right to know whether the noble Lord insists upon the alternative. I ask the noble Lord whether he equally withdraws this with the other charge, or whether he means to imply that the evidence of my hon. Friend ought to be characterised as he has described? The hon. Gentleman says it may be inconvenient to answer a plain question: the noble Lord found it extremely inconvenient to answer the question put to him by my hon. Friend. His answer related only to the first charge, whilst to the other he had not said a word. The hon. Gentleman refers to the Colonial Office, and alleges neglect and omissions; but that, I say, is not the question now before the House. Let a charge, if there is one, be distinctly brought forward, and it shall be as distinctly met. The hon. Gentleman exhausted the quiver of his evidence upon the occasion of his speech; and how has the noble Lord spent the interval between this debate and the night when he commenced this subject? In ransacking *Hansard* for speeches on subjects with which the House has nothing to do; and then the Government are called upon to answer, at once, speeches made elsewhere, from which scraps and extracts have been taken in order to support charges like many others which the noble Lord has not felt himself able to sustain. I repeat that the evidence of my hon. Friend gives a plain temperate statement in reply to the noble Lord. I admit the despatch of Sir C. Grey was not laid before the Committee; but I appeal to every man of honourable mind whether it is a matter of indifference to what circumstance it is attributed—whether to accidental omission or to wilful and fraudulent suppression. To that charge I give a distinct and plain denial. I am sure that those charges thus recklessly made by the noble Lord, and thus attempted to be bolstered up by evidence from other quarters, will not injure the character of my noble Friend in the eyes of this House, or of the other House of Parliament, or of the country. I have only one other observation to make. It is this: the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire spoke of the inconveniences of not having a regular Opposition. The inconveniences of not having an Opposition are certainly not the inconveniences of which we have now to complain, because what we have to complain of, or rather to lament, is, that there is not at the head of that Opposition a Gentleman of high feeling, of honourable mind, of great Parliamentary experience, capable of leading the party which looks up to him as its head—capable of healing their irregular excesses, and who at the same time has some regard to the character of this House, to the decency of our debates, and the character of the party who thus look up to him.

Lord GEORGE BENTINCK: Sir, if I may be allowed to judge by the expression of feeling on the morning of Saturday last, I do not believe that the feeling in this country, more especially the feeling in this House was, that the character of the House was damaged so much by what proceeded from this side of the House as from what fell from the noble Lord at the head of the Government. Sir, having said thus much, I return to the subject of this night's discussion, and I repeat now, what I said upon the morning of Saturday last, and what I think every shorthand writer who heard me upon that occasion conceived me to have said, that I brought a charge not of concoction, but, if not of concoction, I said that the hon. Gentleman was troubled with a short memory. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Northamptonshire (Mr. V. Smith) said that I went into the details of Mr. Cox and Mr. Elliot on Friday night. On the contrary, none of us ever heard of Mr. Cox or Mr. Elliot; therefore the right hon. Gentleman's memory also must be very short as well as that of other people, if he takes upon himself to say that I upon Friday night stated that I believed every minute of Mr. Cox and Mr. Elliot's as well as those of Earl Grey and the hon. Gentleman's to be forgeries. If I have not sooner answered the challenge of the noble Lord, it is because I cannot speak but from my conscience and from my heart; and I remain of the same opinion, that the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State is troubled with a very short memory; for, let any man in this House or out of it, take any twelve men out of the streets, or take the twelve Judges, and let them look at the evidence, and by their verdict I would be guided. Truly the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University must be the most obtuse of cross-examiners, or the hon. Gentleman must have the most obtuse of understandings, if neither the right hon. Gentleman, in three distinct cross-examinations, nor the Members of the Committee, found themselves able to make the hon. Gentleman understand that all our questions related to a despatch relative to the social and agricultural state of the island of Jamaica. Yet such we are told is the case; but I cannot bring myself to think that the hon. Gentleman so entirely misunderstood us, or that we altogether so misunderstood him; because this is true, and this I adhere to, and will not leave—that I charge the Government with a guilty suppression. And when the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department says that I think nothing of a charge of political suppression, did I not say at the very first that it was a grave offence, and that I was impeaching a high Minister of State? Sir, I can find no words strong enough to express my condemnation of the conduct of the noble Lord at the head of the Colonial Department, for the manner in which he suppressed evidence that ought to have been before that Committee, and which ought to have been before the other House of Parliament. Sir, I want to know now from the noble Lord at the head of the Government —I want to know from each and all the Ministers, how you account for Lord Grey and for the Under Secretary of State looking on in silence after the 9th of May? My hon. Friend the Member for Droitwich challenged you to say what the day was on which you discovered your mistake; but you could give no answer. [Mr. HAWES: I rose to give an answer.] Well, then, when was it? [Mr. HAWES: Will the noble Lord sit down?] Yes.

MR. HAWES: Then I beg the noble Lord's attention. The first time that I knew that the directions upon that despatch were not fulfilled, and that the despatch had not been laid before the Committee, was when the noble Lord mentioned it in this House, and I did not know it before.

LORD G. BENTINCK: Then I ask, when did the noble Lord at the head of the Colonial Office know it? [Mr. HAWES: At the same time.] So when this House passes a unanimous resolution that the Colonial Office shall send copies and extracts of despatches from the colonies, does neither the Under Secretary nor the Chief Secretary of State condescend to pay any attention to the order of this House? The hon. Gentleman tells you that the first time he knew of this mistake was when I mentioned it in the House. Why, that was after the despatch was printed, and three weeks after it could have been of any use. How was it that the hon. Gentleman and the noble Earl did not know it? Why, there is but one answer to the question. Either he does not select the despatches, or else he must have known it. If he did select the despatches, he cannot help having known it, for it is arranged the first despatch in order. There can be no doubt on the mind of any man who understands anything of evidence, that the first paper set apart was that very despatch on which it is noted in the margin that its enclosure was sent to the Committee, and which we are told, and all believe, was bedizened and emblazoned over with the minutes, first of Mr. Cox, who at once said that it was a most important despatch, and ought to be before the Committee; next with an endorsement by some other gentleman in the office to the same effect; thirdly, with an endorsement by Earl Grey himself; and finally, by the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State. Therefore, when that despatch came before Lord Grey again, on the 15th of April, and he saw it, and was again brought before him on the 9th of May, he must have seen that a great omission had been committed; and if, he condescends to look at the proceedings of this House, he must have observed that all the questions asked, and all the answers given, related to that despatch; and the moment that he discovered, on the 9th May, that that despatch had not been sent to the Committee, it must have come across his mind that that was the despatch about which we were inquiring. I want to know how the noble Earl and the Government can excuse themselves before the country for remaining silent from the 9th May till the day when in this House I brought the subject forward? It is probable, if I had not mentioned it, nobody would ever have discovered it, nobody would have been the wiser. Even my hon. Friend, the Member for Bristol, never observed that the despatch ought to have been before us previous to the adjournment of the Committee. It would have escaped the notice of the House altogether, whilst the Government and the Colonial Office had all the advantage of keeping back that evidence of Sir Charles Grey from Jamaica, of Governor Higginson from Montserrat, of Lord Harris from Trinidad, and from Berbice. But you who complain of want of courtesy, you who complain that your honour is assailed, how do you account for sitting still in silence and seeing all this going on, and not coming forward, as you were bound to do, the moment you made the discovery, and expressing your regret and making your apology to the Committee, to the great interests depending on it, and to your country, for not having sent that despatch when it was wanted, and for the negligence of your own servant? But you did no such thing—that despatch might have been before the Committee upon the 9th of May. The Committee sat till the 29th. Not a whisper of its existence is breathed, and we hear nothing of it till it is presented to this House. When the right hon. Gentleman charges me that now, for the first time, I bring up debates from the other House of Parliament to aid my cause, I can only say that I adverted to them on the first day I alluded to this subject—on the very evening when the noble Lord introduced his measure. I have allowed all this time for those noble Lords and hon. Gentlemen to investigate this case; but will the noble Lord at the head of the Government tell me, though he has not been charged on exactly the same ground that I have taken, that he has never heard of any complaints upon this head before? Why, have not the newspapers teemed with charges against the Government? Hasn't a popular writer, under the name of "Jacob Omnium" addressed his letters to the noble Lord? Has the noble Lord never seen those letters? Doesn't he read "Jacob Omnium?" Hasn't he read those charges? Do you mean to say that after all this the Government is now to pretend to be taken by surprise, and to come here *in formâ pauperis* for arguments? Let not the right hon. Gentleman or any of his Colleagues fancy for a moment that I deem lightly of the offence of the Government. I charge them with a grave and serious offence, deeply injurious to the best interests of the transmarine possessions of the British Crown.

Mr. CHARTERIS had come down to the House expecting to hear the charges which had been preferred by the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) substantiated or retracted. He must understand, from the manner in which the noble Lord had expressed his concurrence in certain statements which had been made, that he had retracted the charges in so far as the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hawes) was personally concerned; but he was sorry that the noble Lord should have made his retractations so unhandsomely. The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hawes) came out of the ordeal without the slightest imputation upon his honour; but had he (Mr. Charteris) preferred a charge against any hon. Gentleman which he felt bound to retract, he would have done it in another manner than that adopted by the noble Lord. He was prepared to give the noble Lord credit for the industry and zeal with which he had sifted the question; but he regretted that that zeal and industry had not been displayed in a less offensive and less objectionable manner.

Mr. NEWDEGATE said, that the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken seemed to labour under the impression that charges ought to be retracted which had never been made. The right hon. Gentleman (Sir G. Grey) had expressed his regret that the Opposition side of the House was not headed by a man of great weight in the House, and whose influence with his party was such as to restrain any unseemly ebullition which might otherwise break forth. This was the strongest complaint which could be conceived to come from that right hon. Gentleman when his own experiences on that head were borne in mind. The fact was, that Her Majesty's Government wished to direct the attention of the House from the grave charge which had been preferred against it.

Motion for adjournment withdrawn.

SPANISH AFFAIRS.

Mr. B. OSBORNE wished to ask the noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs two questions of which he had given notice. The first was, whether there was any recognised channel in this country through which the Spanish Government could send its communications to the Foreign Office? And the second was, whether the noble Lord was prepared to advise the Crown to abide by the articles of the Quadruple Treaty as regarded Spain?

Viscount PALMERSTON: The relations between the two countries being suspended, there is only a consular organ remaining on each side as the channel of any communication. With regard to the question of the Quadruple Treaty, I am sure the hon. Member must feel that is a question which cannot be answered in one word. That treaty was made under peculiar circumstances and for peculiar purposes. It was made for the purpose of supporting, on the one hand, the rights of the Queen of Spain to the Crown of Spain; and, on the other hand, for the purpose of assisting the Spanish people in maintaining their independence and constitution against what was thought to be a party supported by the means and assistance of foreign States. All I can say is, that Her Majesty's Ministers will never be a party to proceedings, treaty or no treaty, which shall have for their object to enslave any nation whatever upon the face of the earth.

SUGAR DUTIES—ADJOURNED DEBATE (FOURTH NIGHT).

Order of the Day read for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Sugar Duties.

Mr. G. THOMPSON observed that this was not a question affecting alone one particular interest—the interests of the West Indian proprietors. It necessarily embraced those great principles of political economy which had been so frequently debated in that House, and which had been recognised as the soundest and safest basis for our future legislation in reference to matters of commerce. Upon our decision also of that question depended the condition—moral, social, and material—of those who constituted nine-tenths of all the dependencies from which we brought our sugar in the West Indies. If we owed compensation to the West India proprietors, we owed it in a double sense to the slaves, whose emancipation was an admission that a great wrong had been done them; and it must ever be one of the deepest stains upon the character of that House, that whilst so much was done on behalf of the proprietors, nothing was given to those 800,000 victims of the deepest wrong that could be perpetrated by man against man. He contended that there had been no breach of contract. The slaves were paid for at the rate of about *25l.* per head; and, more than that, they were left in the islands, where for a time they remained apprentices; and estates had sold at a higher rate after 1833 than before. In 1843 this system of immigration from India commenced. He went on board the first vessel which went out of Calcutta under the Colonial Passengers' Act, and he saw nothing in that vessel which could convey the idea of discomfort, or any intention on the part of those who had charge of the Coolies, of subjecting them to any inconvenience beyond what was inevitable on the voyage; but so many were the abuses before the end of the year, of persons being put on board who were not the real individuals who had been passed by the protector of the Coolies — so many were the abuses that came to the knowledge of the Government of India, not only of malpractices on the spot, but of the treatment of the Coolies on their arrival at the Mauritius, that the Government were obliged in 1843 to suspend the operation of the Colonial Passengers' Act till they could frame a measure to put an end to the deception and cruelties practised on those unfortunate individuals. He need not remind the House that from that period to the present there had been but one opinion in the minds of all who had looked to the system of emigration—that it had been fraught with every kind of abuse, and subjected the Coolies generally to the most dreadful privations in the colonies to which they had been carried. He opposed this system of emigration on the ground that you could not introduce one of these persons without doing irreparable mischief to the cause of moral and social order in those colonies. Let us try this statement by the mortality which had taken place amongst these persons. Up to January, 1847, there had been imported into Jamaica 175,595 persons. What had been the mortality in the Mauritius? From 1843 to 1847 there had been imported into that colony 68,213, and the deaths amounted to 6,542, or about 1-9th of the whole number imported. What was the proportion of the sexes introduced into that one colony? There were introduced into the Mauritius 55,753 adult men, and 8,350 adult females, making a difference in the sexes of 47,403. There were a series of reports from managers of estates, every one of which spoke of the Coolies as amongst the most unfit persons to be introduced into the colony as agricultural labourers. How were they described? As indolent, mendicants, runaways, vagrants, thieves, vagabonds, filthy, diseased, dissolute, immoral, disgusting, covered with sores. Some were priests, some jugglers, some barbers, some tumblers, some cooks, some grooms, some buffoons, some herdsmen, some pedlars, some scullions, some bakers, tailors, confectioners, instead of agricultural labourers. Many undertook to shave the whole of the labourers, but refused to lift a hoe. The Africans were no better. Richard Hill, of Jamaica, described the Coolies as being the most costly of labourers. Governor Light, of Demerara, said that 13,369 Coolies had to be fed and lodged. It was precisely the same, as to the general features, with those introduced into British Guiana. It would be found wherever this system was scrutinised, whether in India, Africa, or Demerara, that these persons were a deeply demoralised class of human beings. There might be exceptions where there was power to coerce them; they might, under the influence of fear or reward, perform some beneficial amount of labour; but his opinion was that the system of emigration had been false, and to attempt to carry it out extensively, would only be to create a new slave trade under false colours, and of a modified description, so as to injure materially the interests of the colonies, as to their social and moral condition. What had been the conduct of the planters in the West Indies? As late as 1835 the House was inundated with reports of cruelties on the unfortunate apprentices. Government at first turned a deaf ear, but at last they were forced to admit the accuracy of those representations. On the 10th February a noble Lord introduced a series of resolutions in the other House, proposing that there should be stringent laws for the prevention of cruelty to apprentices in the West Indies, and then that apprenticeship should cease and determine on the 1st of the ensuing August. The noble Lord made a powerful and able speech, and narrated from the West Indian newspapers instances of cruelty of a most aggravated kind. He gave an account of the death of no less than eleven persons on the treadmill. The noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonies did not deny the cruelties inflicted on the negro population, and gave instances in which not merely planters but the Colonial Assembly of Jamaica had violated the provisions of the Act for the emancipation of the slaves. There was no one in the other House who ventured to offer a word in refutation of what the noble Lord stated. There sat in that House a nobleman, since deceased, a West Indian proprietor, the Marquess of Sligo, who published a pamphlet giving the result of his own observations in the colony, and fully justifying all the representations that had previously been made by those who had been accused, in this House and elsewhere, of exaggerating the cruelties perpetrated on the negroes. More than that, after publishing his pamphlet anonymously, the noble Lord, in a letter addressed to a particular publication, said, that the object of the publication was to draw attention to the state of the island. He said, "the determination of the planters to defeat the humane provisions of the law, became evident before the completion of the first year of my residence in the colony." Sir Lionel Smith, in October, 1837, said that the island was subject to the reproach that the negroes in some respects were now in a worse condition than they were in slavery; and a gentleman interested in the West Indies, and defending the West Indian interest, had informed the House of what he believed was the universal impression previous to the passing of this Act for the abolition of slavery, that property would have been in the highest degree insecure, to say nothing of the probability of commotion and convulsion. As to the distress which now prevailed, his own conviction was that it did not grow out of the Act of emancipation—it did not grow out of any insubordination or slothfulness on the part of the negro population; still less did it grow out of any measure passed in this House in 1844 or 1846; it grew out of the mismanagement and extravagance combined of those who were interested in West Indian property. It was always so. The

Under Secretary for the Colonies had shown that in 1804 the colonial interests declared themselves in a hopeless and bankrupt condition. Mr. Long, the historian, in 1750, described the planters as in a state of irretrievable distress and ruin. In 1792, 177 estates had been sold for payment of debts, or had been thrown up, and 92 were still in the hands of creditors. They were no better off than in 1807, for they recommended that means should be taken to raise the price of sugar in England. In 1812 they were in a similar condition, and asked for similar relief. In 1813 Mr. Marryatt, a Member of this House, declared in his place, that there were comparatively few estates that had not been sold or given up to creditors. When we heard of the West Indian interest, it was right to inquire who they were, and how many there were. Perhaps the total number of proprietors of estates was not more than 2,000, and there might be some hundred firms in this country whose intimate relations entitled them to be considered as part of the West Indian interests. Was all our sympathy to be bestowed on this portion of our fellow-subjects? He granted that they had every title to the consideration of their claims, and every title to relief, if they could prove that injury had been done to them; and if that relief were consistent with the principles laid down as the basis of commercial freedom, and with the rights, interests, and future prospects of the negro population in the colonies. The hon. Member for the University of Oxford, with a coolness that was painful, cast overboard these meritorious and wronged individuals. The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn described them as despotic. He said they had changed places with their masters. It was nothing of the kind. He did not regret the change; he could not hear that they were becoming freeholders without rejoicing that they had proved themselves, by industry, economy, and a laudable ambition, worthy of the boon conferred upon them; and the House should guarantee them in the possession of their enjoyments, and in the prospect of future advantages for their children. Hon. Members wanted an importation of a large number of labourers. At whose expense? At the expense of those who were emancipated, for no other purpose than to beat down the wages of these people, and to coerce them into the acceptance of terms of which they would not now accept. In all the colonies where fair representation had been made to the negro population, and an appeal made to them as rational human beings, they had accepted lower wages, working in some islands for *5d.*, in others for *9d.* a day. He believed that in all other colonies they would be found to be reasonable, if there was a disposition to be reasonable in those who required their labour. He said, then, that the House should be extremely careful how they gave their sanction to immigration, when conducted by private individuals out of their own resources, or how they sanctioned grants of money for the purpose of promoting that object. There was one class of men whose testimony should be received with respect, namely, the missionaries; on this subject they could have no interest to give a partial or exaggerated statement; and he held in his hand a copy of a petition which had been laid on the table of the House, signed by nine missionaries of the island of Jamaica. But then they were told that they could go to some other part of the world in order to obtain free labour. He had conversed with many captains and persons conversant with the coast of Africa, and he could not lay his finger upon any one spot upon the whole of that coast where it could be obtained. They heard much of the Kroomen and of the Fish nation, and that, too, from persons who he was convinced knew very little about the matter—as little as was known of the Coolies when they were first imported. He, however, did not believe that they could get any large number of Kroomen or of the Fish nation. You must, therefore, take the poor miserable wretches in the yard at Sierra Leone, and lift them over the side of the vessel, as was done in the case of the *Growler*, with the faint hope that you may carry them to the colonies. This West India interest is doomed; it cannot survive; it must die to live again. There is no other redemption for it; it is not in the power of this House to resuscitate it. Take them upon their own showing, and you will see that this is the case. What is the difference which they want to make up? Fifteen and ninepence per cwt. They have not told you how it is to be done. Is it by a ten shilling discriminating duty? Why, that would be leaving five shillings unpaid. But can you in any justice so charge the people of this country? Would the country for one instant consent to pay ten shillings or one shilling per cwt. for this sugar? He believed not.

They were told that they ought to do it for the sake of consistency—that it was a matter of conscience. It may be so with a few men; but it was not generally so, and they had no right to impose it upon the country, which had not as yet spoken out upon the subject. He went the other day to an anti-slavery meeting composed of four thousand persons. He went unattended, save by one hon. Gentleman, maintaining the same opinion as he did. He submitted his views to the meeting, and although they were met for the purpose of protesting against slavery, they entirely agreed with him that there was no justification in taxing the entire community to the extent of some millions per annum for the sake of excluding slave-grown sugar. Let no man tell him it was a case of conscience; it made guilt depend upon a question of time. If it was wrong to consume Brazilian sugar now, it would be no less so in ten years. If it was wrong to consume slave-grown sugar, it was equally wrong to consume slave-grown cotton. If it was wrong to consume slave-grown tobacco, it was equally wrong to consume slave-made rum. He would take the hon. Baronet (Sir J. Pakington) under the walls of the capital of the United States, and he would show him there scenes which he had himself witnessed, as revolting as any ever yet described. They were bound to be consistent; and if hon. Gentlemen came down to that House to recommend the prohibition of slave-grown produce altogether, he should know how to act. When hon. Gentlemen talked of consistency, they should endeavour to be consistent. But hon. Gentlemen never saw slavery until they saw sugar. Their observation was bounded by the circumference of a hogshead. They cannot see slavery in cotton, and your mills may make a continuity of brickwork from Manchester to London, without awakening a thought upon the subject; but touch sugar, and then they come down and try to persuade the House that all the great principles of humanity, justice, and religion, are bound up in the vote which you shall give. He thought it would be unwise to base their legislation upon such partial principles. He honoured the man who objected to slave-grown produce upon principle, lest he should become *particeps criminis* of the slavedealer. But let them show him, if they could, that the nation at large partook in such a feeling. Their objects were not to be effected by immigration, nor by the establishment of cruisers and tenders on the court of Africa. They had washed their hands of slavery. But while they had a British Ambassador at the Court of Brazil, and another at Washington—so long as they allowed their citizens a station amongst them of respectability and character, and so long as they had in their own minds a recollection of the recent period in which they first disavowed slavery—it was not for them to turn round and teach that the great doctrines of freedom and justice ought to be maintained by fiscal enactments. With these views, although opposed to slavery, he could not vote with those who called upon him to do so in his character of an abolitionist. The West India interest was in the predicament of a man involved head and ears in debt, who would go to a friend and say, "Lend me 500*l.*" "What good will it do you?" "Oh, I can do this, and I can do that with it—in fact, I can do everything." He gets the 500*l.*, he shakes off a temporary difficulty; but in a few days he is as deeply involved as ever, and the 500*l.* is lost into the bargain. This was precisely the situation of the West India colonies. Estates can change hands without being abandoned, and estates must change hands. The possession of these estates must go out of the hands of the present owners. Can no one cultivate sugar but those who at present hold estates? He trusted that he should see the day when there would be but very few absentee proprietors. What was formerly the fact? How was it that the West India interest was formerly so strong? Why, the younger members of titled families married rich West Indian heiresses, and dying bequeathed these coffee mountains and sugar plains to their children's children; and the time was when they were so strong in this House that they could make their own terms with the Minister, and they held every Government in thrall. That day was gone by since 1832. If this relief were granted, it would bring no permanent prosperity to the West Indian interest. Their fate was sealed, they could not compete with Cuba. No, they could not compete with Cuba, for it was a question of extent of country, of quality of soil, of cheapness of labour. Energy might do much, personal inspection might do more; but he thought that, under the present system, any money which they gave would only serve to ward off the evil day, and they would again be crowded with petitions of a similar nature to those lying on the table. He deeply regretted that Her Majesty's Government had made any concession whatever: while he could not vote for any larger measure of relief, neither could he support any departure from the principles laid down in 1846. There might be some recommendation for the scheme, if it was large and comprehensive—if it afforded a beneficial protection; but it did not possess even this recommendation, and to his mind it was without one single advantage. It was a retrograde step upon the part of the Government, without bestowing any considerable amount of benefit on those with whose distress they professed to sympathise. An extraordinary recommendation for the vote they were called upon to give was certainly that statement of the Under Secretary for the Colonies, in which he informed them that if the money was voted, and if it was placed at his disposal, he did not know to which colony to apply it. [Mr. HAWES: The hon. Gentleman misconceived my words.] The noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) stated to the Coffee Committee that he could not point to any part of the coast of Africa where they could obtain labour, without the liability to great abuse in the manner of obtaining it, and without the liability in some sort of reviving the horrors of the slave trade. He could not consent to vote this money, because it was for the avowed object of diminishing the price of labour in the colonies, which he considered a piece of injustice; neither could he support protection, for it would be a gross injustice to the people of these countries. He was in this dilemma: he could neither support the Government nor the Protectionists, and he accordingly rejected both propositions for the reasons which he had stated.

MR. BERNAL was deeply impressed with the importance of this subject, and was only sorry that it should have become one that engaged the attention of the House almost periodically, he might say perennially. He was almost sick of thinking upon the subject, much more of expressing any opinion upon it. But they had it before them, and were bound to deal with it in a spirit of impartiality, honesty, and sincerity. There were several kinds of adversaries—there was the open adversary, the concealed adversary, and the dubious adversary. He could not class the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down under any other category or description than that of an open, and, he trusted, a sincere, adversary. He had known the hon. Gentleman at different periods, and had encountered him at public meetings, and had always found him an undeviating, and, without intending offence, the rancorous adversary of the West Indian interest. He had hoped, that the bitterness of spirit which used to infuse itself into the debates on this question had been buried for ever. He did not expect that the cruelties inflicted during the state of slavery, or during the more mitigated state of apprenticeship, would have been brought forward to influence the feelings and opinions of the House upon this occasion. There were only two propositions before them—that of the Government, and the other which was indistinctly sketched out by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford. The proposition of the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) was to have, for six years, another scale of diminishing protecting duties, accompanied with a promise that sugar imported from the colonies might be refined in bond; and it was also coupled with a promise that the differential duty now existing between British colonial spirits and home-made spirits should be reduced to a uniform discriminating duty of 4*d*. To this was added, that a loan of 500,000*l*. should be advanced to the colonies for the purposes of immigration. Before he proceeded to deal with that matter, he thought it necessary to allude to certain doctrines advanced, and certain assertions made, by hon. Gentlemen who had taken part in what might be termed the continuous discussion on this question. He alluded more particularly to the hon. Under Secretary for the Colonies, and the hon. Member for Westbury (Mr. Wilson). The House would remember the argument of his hon. Friend (Mr. Wilson) on a former occasion, when he spoke of the cultivation of beetroot sugar. He would ask his hon. Friend if he did not advance this singular doctrine—that the cultivation of beetroot sugar in the German States, within what was called the circle of the Zollverein League, was going on at an increasing ratio, although attended by considerable disadvantage. But would his hon. Friend deny, that hitherto a very small duty—and he believed, that up to 1834 or 1836 there was no duty at all—was imposed on muscovado sugar manufactured from beetroot, whilst a far higher duty was imposed on colonial sugar in the States of the Zollverein League; and was not that a manifest advantage and sufficient reason to account for the increased cultivation of beetroot sugar? Again, let him call the attention of his hon. Friend to certain statements he had advanced with respect to the prosperity of Porto Rico. His hon. Friend had spoken of the fine roads of that island; but he could tell his hon. Friend that in April last it was almost impossible to travel upon them except on horseback. Then the hon. Member for Westbury, in contrasting the situation of Cuba with that of the British West Indies, spoke of 800 miles of railway as having been constructed there. He was thunderstruck when he heard that sentence. There might be railways between the Havannah and Matanzas, between the principal shipping ports of the island; but where the magnificent double or broad-gauge lines existed, except in his hon. Friend's imagination, he did not know. He believed it was stated in a pamphlet that was accessible to all, that not more than 140 miles of railway had been constructed there. But to return to Porto Rico. Did not the hon. Member for Westbury know that that island was originally a penal settlement of Old Spain, and that it was within the last twenty years the sugar cane had been so much cultivated there? And the reason why it was so much cultivated was, that the Spanish Government did all they could to make it a prosperous sugar-growing island, and had passed a law prohibiting the estate of any debtor who was a planter from being taken in execution for his debts. [*A laugh.*] Hon. Gentlemen might laugh, but if such a law were introduced here it might not be unacceptable to some. However, as he had been informed, the consequence of that law in Porto Rico was, that often persons who were in debt in the adjoining island of St. Thomas clubbed together and invested all they could in Porto Rico, in the purchase of a sugar estate, in order to make better bargains with their creditors. There were also many free labourers there; but there were not many who would work in the boiling-houses, and the principal part of that labour was performed by the slave population. But, said his hon. Friend the Under Secretary for the Colonies—"the truth must be told, *Magna est veritas et prævalebit.*" He did not know what awful mysteries were to be disclosed; but after all came the old echo, which was taken up by his hon. Friend's Coryphæus, the Member for the Tower Hamlets, that, in 1840, the Assembly of Jamaica in the same manner grumbled, and sent home remonstrances about their distress; but what large interest was there that was not subject to vicissitudes from various causes? The agitation in this country had unsettled the minds of the black peasantry in the different colonies, and had occasioned a vast deal of that distress of which his hon. Friend complained. He thought the taunt of his hon. Friend was not indicative of the candid mind he had believed him to possess. His hon. Friend said, "Was the present distress honestly complained of?" Would his hon. Friend pretend that there was any parallel between the distress of former years, and that which existed now? He spoke of Jamaica as being an island with which he was connected, and more intimately acquainted, than with others; but he thought the taunt of his hon. Friend conveyed a plain and unmistakeable insinuation that the planters and persons connected with property in Jamaica were not honest in their complaints. There was a blue book—[*said the hon. Member, slightly kicking a large volume that lay at his feet*]—he had never read it—it was too sore and personal a subject for him to wade through it. He had not supported the appointment of the Committee, and was not even now convinced that much good was obtained from it, though he never should retract his opinion of the unwearied assiduity and pure and honourable motives of his noble Friend who presided over it; but if his hon. Friend the Under Secretary for the Colonies would consult the despatch contained in the volume from Sir C. Grey in December, 1847, he would find a detailed return of the estates that had been abandoned in Jamaica since 1832. In that year there were about 640 sugar estates in that island, but 142 had been since abandoned, and the coffee plantations, also abandoned, were most numerous. What ground, then, was there for charging the proprietors with dishonesty? [Mr. Hawes: Their complaints reminded him of the old cry of the wolf.] It was too serious a subject to be dealt with by fables, and he would tell his hon. Friend, though he did not wish to make him the incarnation of the abuse that had been doled out against the unfortunate proprietors, that he had heard him say many things respecting those proprietors, to which he must strongly object. His hon. Friend had said, how could they expect at 4,000 miles' distance to conduct their estates with profit? The same argument had been repeated *usque ad nauseam;* but many parties, named in the report of that Committee, who had become proprietors since the Emancipation Act, and who had been constantly resident in Jamaica, devoting their whole time and attention to the personal superintendence of their estates, had declared they could not carry on the cultivation successfully, and would be ruined; and he believed that no man could get a loan of 5,000*l.* or 3,000*l.* on the security of any property in Jamaica. His hon. Friend said, "Let us have the truth." Now, what was the truth? He had heard that it had been stated at meetings about the country, and also in debates in that House, that the proprietors were reckless spendthrifts; and encumbered with mortgages; and how could it be expected that such men would rise from their difficulties? But he would tell his hon. Friend that many proprietors within his own knowledge had estates that were not encumbered, and never had been encumbered. His hon. Friend near him had estates which never had been embarrassed; and, although he did not wish to speak of himself, he could say, that he had not at that moment, and never had had one shilling on mortgage of any of his properties in Jamaica. Those properties were in a good situation, and had the advantage of being near the sea shore; but they had been, and continued to be, a losing concern. And let not the House suspect that he was a prejudiced bigot, and averse to the introduction of practical remedies. He knew he was not, for every demand made on him for the better cultivation of his property, by agricultural implements or otherwise, was attended to, and his estates were under the management of a free-trader, as free in heart and principle, and as energetic in action, as the hon. Member for Manchester, or the hon. Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire. The hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets was known to entertain peculiar views on this question, and he probably would not be sorry to see the Antilles altogether abandoned as sugar colonies, in order that he might realise his favourite project of obtaining our supply of sugar from the East Indies. The hon. Member was quite right, however, in what he had said about the Coolies; they were the worst description of immigrants that could be imported into the West Indies. The disadvantages arising from different habits, occasioned by the powerful laws of their religious creed, and of caste, as well as those springing from natural causes, were obstacles of immense importance. Then, as respected African immigrants, he, for one, was not convinced that there was an absolute deficiency of labour in the West Indies. It was well known that Barbadoes was over-populous, and in some parts of Jamaica there was abundance of labour, whilst in other parts it was deficient. What the planters wanted was security for a continuous and regular supply of labour. It was unjust to accuse the planters of a desire to reduce the wages of labour; all they wished—and they were entitled to it—was to obtain a sufficient amount of daily and efficient work for the wages which they were willing to pay. At present, five days a week constituted the utmost extent of labour; and some labourers would work only two, and others three days in the week. The planters, in many instances, wished to encourage taskwork; but it was quite out of the question to secure the proper performance of such taskwork generally. The planters asked not for favour—they simply demanded justice. When emancipation was passed, not the slightest intimation was given that the British colonists were to be exposed to competition with the slaveholders of Cuba and the Brazils. Mr. Wilberforce, and the other leaders of the antislavery party, always repudiated the notion. Lord Glenelg, in one of his despatches in 1838, stated in the plainest terms that faith would be kept with the planters. He had no complaint to make against the negro labourers as a body. They had, with few exceptions, been treated kindly by their owners previous to emancipation, and they were grateful for it afterwards; but their feelings had been worked upon by interested parties. Now, were the colonies worth preserving, or not? Considering the favour shown to the doctrine of "buying in the cheapest market, and selling in the dearest," it would not be surprising if it should be answered, that they were not. The House had heard of Mr. Stipendiary Strutt and the inertness of the proprietors in Guiana, and their neglect to adopt the vacuum-pan process, and so forth; he (Mr. Bernal) knew instances where the best processes had been tried, and every effort made, but in vain. At this moment, estates were being abandoned in Jamaica; estates were being forced to sale at prices so ruinously small that he should seem to draw largely upon the credulity of the House if he were to state them. He knew of one of 2,000 acres, with cattle and good works, and all the machinery proper for the cultivation of a sugar estate, offered for 1,800*l.* to 2,000*l.* He knew of one, which it was reported was to be let for 100*l.* a year, if the stock could be got rid of, and which, in other times, had produced an income of some thousands a year. It might be said, "Why do you then, burden yourselves with the cultivation of such unprofitable estates?" Why, a great number of proprietors had nothing else to resort to—it was their last stake. Family settlements in many cases bound them strictly up, with covenants for the maintenance of the estates. They were entangled with these properties. They also lived in hopes of better times. He confessed that he, for one, was living in hope from day to day; but he was reminded of Dante's description of a place said to be "paved with good intentions;" there were sanguine and cheering prospects traced out by some parties, but the realisation of the prospects seemed to grow more distant day by day. Was the Jamaican less a subject of this realm than the Yorkshireman? Was he not entitled to the same privileges, and to an equal share of the protection and advantages, which the latter enjoyed? The Norfolk farmer had a protection as against the Pomeranian wheat grower by the amount of the freight and charges of shipping which are incurred on the importation of the produce of the latter; the West Indian had no such protection as against the Cuban; had he no right to a countervailing duty? He did not call it "protection;" he had never asked for protection. He never attended deputations at the Colonial Office—he liked to be free as the wind. He had trusted to the honour and good faith of the Government; not that he approved blindly of their schemes. To begin with the 500,000*l.*, with respect to which the hon. Gentleman on the Treasury bench had said that he did not know where to lay his hand on a sufficient number of Kroomen, or other immigrants; he did not want these men to be imported to grind down the wages of the peasantry below their fair amount; all that he wanted was the moral effect of the knowledge that there was a fund of labour to resort to, if the negroes chose to be idle and neglect their work. With regard to the scale of duties, he knew it was far better for the West Indian interest to have a diminishing scale, as detailed on the part of the Government (confining himself to muscovado, and not referring to brown clayed sugar), than the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Gladstone.) The Government plan, in this particular, was infinitely the better. But with respect to the loan of 500,000*l.*, surely it ought not to be limited to the importation of labourers. There were extensive works of a public nature, the construction of roads and railways, which might be carried on with great advantage. Jamaica, for instance, suffered in some of its districts greatly from drought; money expended for irrigation therein might be productive of the greatest benefit. He was acquainted with the case of a gentleman who had introduced the system of irrigation upon his properties in Porto Rico, and who at the end of four years had very considerably increased the production of sugar on his estate; in fact, he believed, such production had been made more than fourfold. [The hon. Gentleman here stated several numerical details in proof of this point.] This was no new system; it had been adopted in Spain, and also in the extensive empire of China. He must request the serious attention of hon. Gentlemen to this subject, for he considered that any grant of money that might be made to the West India proprietors would be equally advantageous, if applied to the furtherance of the public works to which he had referred, as to the promotion of immigration. Why, he would ask, should a West India proprietor be taunted with apathy, because he did not adopt the most expensive modern plans for the improvement of his West India property, when, although that property was subject to neither mortgage, jointure, dower, bond, or any other incumbrance, he would at this moment be unable to obtain an advance of 1,000*l.* upon it? The misfortune of the West India interest was, that it was constantly assailed with taunts and reproaches. It was well known to be weak, and the attacks made upon it bore the semblance of attempts to extirpate and destroy it. If he were disposed to enter into details, he thought he should be able to satisfy the House that the prosperity of this country had been intimately connected with, if not dependent upon, the maintenance of her colonies. He would ask the House whether, in the time of Rodney, and prior to that period, the safety of this country, and the security of the Throne, had not been mainly dependent upon the elongation, if he might use such a term, and the removal to a distance, of the scene of war; and whether, by these means, the calamities of war and rapine had not been averted from these happy shores? The old doctrine had been to preserve our colonies; but the modern doctrine seemed to be that it was vulgar and unfashionable to have any colonies at all. He would remind hon. Gentlemen that the Government of France, in order to promote the improvements of her colonial possessions, had formerly held out the promise of patents of nobility to those who engaged in the cultivation of the sugar cane; and the Spaniards, proud as they were, had deemed it an honourable employment to engage in cultivating the rich districts of Cuba and St. Domingo. He should be sorry that at the present time this country should so far forget the dictates of prudence as to look upon her important colonial possessions as not worth keeping. He might observe that the island of Jamaica, with which he was more immediately connected, paid all her own local expenses. It was true the people of Jamaica did not pay their bishop, for, as the mitre and the prelatical robes were considered necessary for the colony by this country, the expense was borne by the mother country.. The stipendiary magistrates and the commander of the forces were also paid by this country; but all other expenses connected with the Government were borne by the people of Jamaica. It might be said that Jamaica did not bear the charge of the West India regiments, and of the service companies of one or two regiments of the line that were stationed in the island; but he would remind the House that they had to send troops to Scotland to keep the peace of the country. ["No!" *from an hon. Member from Scotland.*] He (Mr. Bernal) was very glad to hear the Scotch were such a sedate set of men; but he begged to remind the hon. Gentleman that they occasionally heard of slight disturbances at Glasgow, or a little tendency to be noisy at Paisley. Donald was a very loyal man, but he thought Sandy, though perhaps equally loyal, was not always as quiet. He (Mr. Bernal) hoped that he would never be disposed to give a vote merely to further his own interest; but, finding that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been true to his engagement with respect to the differential duty upon rum—that he had resisted the seductive coquetry of the Irish Gentlemen in that matter, he intended to vote in favour of the proposition of his noble Friend the Member for the city of London. For the reasons he had given, although he was not a sanguine or warm admirer either of that plan or of any other that had been propounded, he would vote so. He had to choose between difficulties, and he accepted the proposal of his noble Friend (Lord J. Russell) because no better plan had been brought forward.

Sir J. GRAHAM: Sir, although I have for some time wished to make a few observations on this subject, I was desirous not to obtrude my opinions upon the House; and I hope on that ground the House will exercise forbearance towards me, while I state very shortly my reasons for the vote I am about to give. I have listened with great attention to the remarks of the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down. I have listened to him on account of my great respect for his abilities, and also on account of his position as a distinguished Member of the West India body in this House. I can assure him that I did not join in that mirth which accompanied the statement of his vote; but I attempted in vain to discover what are the remedies which he, with his great knowledge and experience, would suggest to the House. I can also assure my hon. Friend that I entirely concur in the sentiments with which he commenced his speech. I think the subject we are now discussing is most important, that it is surrounded with many difficulties; and I agree with my hon. Friend, that, characterised as it is by its importance and its difficulty, it must be decided, if it be decided upon sound principle, with reference to the interests of the entire community. I agree also with my hon. Friend, in deprecating the introduction of bitterness into this discussion. I think that any feeling of that kind would most unworthily accompany anything which falls from me, and that anything like taunt and sarcasm from me would be peculiarly misplaced. For it is not denied that the West Indian interest are a suffering interest, and I agree with what has fallen from my hon. Friend that this commercial empire is under immense obligations to the West Indies with reference to its commercial and mercantile importance. I must again advert to the difficulty I have had in listening to the speech of my hon. Friend, to know what are the remedies which, from his judgment and experience, he considers practicable to be adopted. He declares that he is opposed to all importation of Coolies, which had been condemned by the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets, who had referred to printed evidence upon that subject. So also, if I mistake not, my hon. Friend objects to large importations of liberated Africans. ["No!"] It may, at all events, be doubted whether he thinks the importation of liberated Africans a boon to the colonies. Nor did my hon. Friend ask for protection, because he said that, considering the position of the West Indies with reference to the British farmer, as the farmer no longer enjoyed protection, the West Indian could no longer claim it. I confess that, after this disclaimer, I have great difficulty in knowing the precise views of my hon. Friend. I do not hold very different views from what my hon. Friend has expressed with respect to the legislation of this House, or rather of Parliament, with reference to the question of slavery and our slave policy in antecedent years. The abolition of the slave trade I consider as the proudest memorial of the short Administration of Mr. Fox, whose fortunate lot it was to see the triumph of the measure which, throughout his life, he had steadily advocated. I also regard as the proudest memorial of the Administration of Earl Grey the measure of slave emancipation, which I consider as a great triumph in the cause of liberty and humanity; and I rejoice that it was my good fortune to have a share in the Administration by which the abolition of slavery was carried. I do not deny that I regard it as a misfortune, and that the West Indies have some ground of complaint, that although the large sum of 20,000,000*l.* was granted when emancipation was carried, the apprenticeship system, which was a part of the general arrangement, was cut short by the Legislature. Now, having said this, I will give a brief glance at the legislation which followed when I had the honour of being a Colleague of my right hon. Friend the Member for Tamworth and my right hon. Friend the Member for the University of Cambridge. There had been brought into direct competition with the West Indies, and admitted upon equal terms, the sugars of the East Indies and the Mauritius, when, in pursuance of the policy which received the sanction of the late Parliament, my right hon. Friend (Sir R. Peel) thought the time had arrived for reducing the price of articles of the first necessity, and our attention was directed to that article of great importance, the article of sugar. In 1844, when the tariff was altered, and the duty on articles of the first necessity, and more especially on articles constituting the food of the people, was reduced, we saw that the time had arrived when the duty on sugar must be reduced. But it was necessary to pay attention to what was the state of the supply, for it was quite clear that if the supply were deficient as compared with the demand, any reduction of duty would not have lowered the price to the consumer, but would have enhanced it only for the producer. It became necessary, then, to look to the state of the supply at that time, to look to the British possessions in the West and East Indies, and to calculate what would be the supply, supposing foreign sugar were practically excluded. The supply, then, appeared to us to be confined within such narrow limits that it was barely adequate to the demand, and an enlargement of the area of the supply appeared to us to be absolutely necessary. We thereupon resolved, simultaneously with a reduction of the duty upon colonial sugar, to admit upon easy terms, as compared with slave-labour sugar, sugar the produce of free labour. Now, I admit for myself—and in discussing a matter of such vast importance, and speaking without the responsibility of office as an individual, I may be allowed to state the whole truth—that it was a great imperfection in the measure as introduced by us in 1845, that we did not give greater prominence to the important question of the encouragement or discouragement of the slave trade. Sir, it is impossible to deny, that by attracting free-labour sugar from the market of Europe you are creating a vacuum in that market which is filled up by slave-labour sugar. But at the same time I do not admit that the direct admission into the English market of slave-labour sugar is not a much greater encouragement than the indirect encouragement given to slave-labour sugar by admitting free-labour sugar into the English market. But that was not the only difficulty of the policy of my right hon. Friend the Member for Tamworth. We were compelled to admit that it was necessary for us, under the obligations of treaties, and under the "most favoured nation" clause, to admit the sugar of the United States of America, and even of certain republics of South America. The admission of free-labour sugar thereby trenched upon the principle of not giving encouragement to slave labour; and the question was argued with consummate ability by my hon. Friend the Member for the University of Oxford, as between the Spanish Government and the American Government. The subject was one of great difficulty, but I think upon the whole the balance was in favour of the course which we pursued. Still I admit it was a doubtful case, and one in which good faith was concerned, which ought never to be swerved from. I am still disposed, on the whole, to defend the policy of 1845 with respect to the course we took upon the sugar duties; but the House will recollect that in the following year Her Majesty's present Ministers, with perfect consistency, almost necessarily pursuing, indeed, the course which they had adopted in opposition, sought to give effect to the policy which they had advocated then. They had objected to the admission of the sugar of the United States, and to the refusal to admit that of Cuba, on the grounds I have stated, that an imaginary line was drawn in taking the sugar of one slave-labour State and refusing that of another, and that the Spanish Government had, under treaty, a right to a different course from that which we adopted. Her Majesty's Ministers then, on their accession to power, sought in 1846 to destroy the difference between slave and free-labour sugar. I can only say, speaking for myself, that I gave an unwilling support to that measure. I did so upon the grounds stated by my right hon. Friend the Member for Tamworth, who was the head of the Government under which I served; and, upon the whole, I considered that we had so lately left office —that the present Government, in displacing us, enjoyed the confidence of the House —it did appear to me altogether unfitting that I should take part in overturning the Government to which I had so lately given way, and that it was not desirable that I should attempt to produce a change in a Government which had been so lately formed. Now, I must say, that this House and the Legislature took the step of passing the Act of 1846 deliberately, on full argument, and after passing all the facts of the case in review. The bearing of the change of policy on the question of the encouragement of the slave trade, was amply discussed and considered, and the policy of 1846 deliberately received the sanction of both Houses of Parliament; and, without pronouncing any decision on a matter of this kind to be absolutely final, yet, I think the step then taken was deliberately taken—as deliberately as any Act that ever passed the Legislature—giving ample warning to the West Indies on the one hand, and to all foreign Powers on the other, that our policy with respect to sugar was a settled and a fixed one. What has been the effect of that policy? It has greatly added to the revenue, reduced the price to the consumer, and I am not satisfied that it has increased the slave trade in any great degree. At all events, I must say that the intention of the Legislature, as I collected it from what passed at the time, has been carried exactly into effect by the consequences of the measure which was then adopted. I now ask, what is the precise demand at present made on the Legislature in reference to a proposed reversal of the step taken in 1846? I have heard several suggestions; and my right hon. Friend the Member for Coventry said, I think, that "we want a little assistance to tide over our difficulties." This is exactly what I have heard from the West Indian body ever since I have had a seat in Parliament. "We want a little assistance," they say, but they never specify what that assistance should be. Then a petition had been presented from the West Indian body, which was a little more distinct; but I believe that petition was not quite formal, and there being some technical difficulty in the way, I doubt whether it was laid on the table or printed; but I think I caught some expressions used in that petition to this effect: the petitioners said that no legislation that does not assure profitable cultivation will be of any avail. Now, observe this is what they ask you to do—by legislation to assure profitable cultivation. That appeared to me to be a general request, which it was impossible to give effect to. Then we come to something still more specific in the proposition of my hon. Friend the Member for Droitwich, which we are now discussing; and though there was vagueness in the assertion of my right hon. Friend the Member for Coventry to the effect that "we want some assistance to tide over our difficulties," and in the request of the West India body that Parliament should adopt "some legislation to assure profitable cultivation," I fully expected to find something specific in what the Member for Droitwich stated. He began by reference to immigration; and said that a 7*s*. differential duty per cwt. against foreign sugar, whether slave-grown or free-labour, was insufficient. Now I want to know what will be sufficient? Then we come to the report of the Committee over which the noble Lord the Member for Lynn presided, and I see it there stated that a discriminating duty of 10*s.* per cwt. for six years is indispensable, otherwise the abandonment of the majority of the estates is inevitable. A discriminating duty of 7*s.* is insufficient; but a discriminating duty of 10*s.* for six years is declared to be indispensable, unless the majority of the estates are to be thrown out of cultivation. Sir C. Grey, in that despatch of which we have heard so much, expresses an opinion similar to that at which the Committee arrived. The answer to that despatch was written by Earl Grey on the 14th of April, and I must be permitted to read a very short passage from it:—

> "The high rate of wages, the insufficiency of the labour given, and the want of a steady command of it by the planters, are, in my apprehension, in a great measure attributable to those duties, which, by maintaining artificial prices of sugar, have induced the planters to compete with each other in the labour market, and produce in their turn artificial wages of labour. In point of fact, by leading the planters to expect prices for their produce which have not been realised, and thus inducing them to raise wages beyond their proper proportion to the market value of sugar, I believe the system of protection to have been seriously injurious to the cultivators of sugar. It is by reducing both prices and wages to their natural amount, that I hope to see the cost of production brought to its due proportions, and a sound basis established for that energy, enterprise, and improvement, by which the cultivation may be again rendered remunerative."

I must say that this passage of the answer written by Earl Grey does appear to me to contain the sound doctrine fairly stated, and quite conclusive as an answer to the recommendations of Sir C. Grey. It was sound in principle, accurate in fact, and a good answer both to the recommendations of the Committee, and to the suggestions of Sir C. Grey. I will also refer to another authority on this point—to the hon. Member for Leominster, whose evidence before the Committee was characterised by ability, discretion, and fairness. In his evidence, if I mistake not, the hon. Gentleman stated that the amount of protection recommended by the Committee of 10*s.* would, if prolonged beyond two years, be injurious in the highest degree. In the case of the Mauritius it is not alleged that there is any want of labour; on the contrary, the immigration into the Mauritius has been pushed to an extent almost incredible, somewhere about 65,000 Coolies having been introduced within the last five years. This had stimulated the production to that degree, that notwithstanding this immense addition to the number of labourers, the rate of wages had risen from six to ten dollars a month. This was a proof of the truth of the observations of Earl Grey. I think there is a peculiarity in respect to sugar, which renders protection, as applied to that article, peculiarly dangerous. I think that in its very nature the growth of sugar is a gambling speculation, very much like the growth of hops in this country; the profits are sometimes great, and sometimes the losses immense; and anything like protection, holding out a prospect of high prices, generates infallibly speculation, which operates in the labour market, and the tendency of protection is greatly to enhance wages. What is the statement made by the hon. Member for Droitwich? There was a dispute between him and the hon. Member for Westbury, with respect to the different cost of production in the West Indies as contrasted with slave-labour countries. I will assume my hon. Friend the Member for Droitwitch to be right. He makes the average cost of production in the West Indies to be 1*l.* 2*s.* 8*d.* per cwt.; and the average cost of production in Brazil, Porto Rico, and Cuba, somewhere about 6*s.* 8*d.* per cwt.; making on the whole a difference of 15*s.* 9*d.* in the cost of production. Assuming my hon. Friend to be right, what becomes of the 10*s.* protection as an efficacious remedy? My hon. Friend's statement, assuming it to be right as to cost of production, is a conclusive argument against the efficacy of that proposition. But what is the proposition of my hon. Friend? As the proposition now stands in the hands of the Speaker, no one can tell what is the meaning of my hon. Friend; and though second thoughts are sometimes best for the purpose of catching votes, they do not always lead one to express one's meaning in the clearest possible manner. There is certainly a freshness about first thoughts which indicate the intentions of the party better. I have in my hand the first resolution of my hon. Friend, and it runs in these not ambiguous, but perfectly intelligible terms:—

> "That any change in the present duties on sugar which is not in accordance with the resolutions which have been reported to the House by the Select Committee on Sugar and Coffee Planting in the present Session, will be insufficient to avert the ruin with which the sugar-growing pos-

sessions of the British Crown are now threatened, or to check that increase of the slave trade which has been the result of the Sugar Duties Act of 1846."

There is no disguising from ourselves this truth, that the proposition now urged upon the acceptance of the House is the adoption of a 10*s.* duty for a period of six years. That which we are called upon to do is to make this proposed duty permanent for six years, which it was said could alone prevent the throwing out of cultivation of the majority of the West Indian estates. I repeat that this proposition is no more or less than a 10*s.* duty for six years. This is certainly not the opportunity for discussing the plan of the Government, or the plan either of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford; but this I will at once say, that I am opposed to a 10*s.* duty for six years, for I consider it to be inexpedient, first, with reference to the colonies themselves. It cannot have been forgotten by the House that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire, when on the first night he was discussing the plan of the noble Lord, said, that two years ago he had foretold a reaction, and had specified the time at which he apprehended that that reaction would take place; and now the time of that reaction has arrived. I know that according to the strict rule of this House, I am not at liberty to state any accounts of what is supposed to have occurred in another place; but we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that Lord Stanley has proposed to prolong the time during which the corn laws are to continue in operation. We find, also, now in this House, the right hon. Member for Stamford, whom I rejoice again to see amongst us, for I am sure we all highly esteem his experience, knowledge, and eminent abilities, and consider his opinions entitled to great attention—now, as we all have heard, it is his opinion that nothing can be done for the relief of the West Indies. It is by some hon. Members, in effect, desired that we should have a duty approaching a prohibitory tax. If we went to a prohibitory duty—if, under the earnest advice which we have received, and influenced by the proposition of the Duke of Richmond, a reaction be impending, I have only to say, that to any such reaction I am opposed. In passing, let me advert to a little of what has been said with respect to cheap sugar, and of the connexion which the noble Lord said there existed between cheap production and low wages. I do not shrink from that declaration. My official experience— [Lord G. Bentinck: You stated it both ways.] That taunt falls upon me harmlessly. No taunt can now drive me from office to make way for others. I have no power which the noble Lord or others may desire to deprive me of, to bestow it elsewhere. I desire nothing but to speak the plain truth. I was of opinion that low prices made low wages, but my official experience seems to justify the conclusion that high prices make low wages; and the effects of low wages fall most heavily on the working classes at a time when they are least able to bear that evil, because then they are in a condition the least able to purchase the prime necessaries of life. I am satisfied you must be most cautious not to let anything enhance the prices of articles of the first necessity. Cheap sugar is not to be laughed at; notwithstanding the anathema of the Duke of Richmond, sugar enters into the comforts of every family. It is the only little luxury that many families can enjoy; it renders palatable their rice, their gruel, their crout, their indifferent tea and coffee. It is our duty, as far as possible, to cheapen everything. When it becomes a question of reaction and of prohibitory duties, I oppose myself to reaction, for I believe that in the present state of the country that policy is impracticable; if practicable, most dangerous, and if carried into effect, I should tremble for the consequences. I promised not to detain the House long, and I shall only add that I consider this the first step in the line of reaction—that I am not prepared to take that step—and I will not waste the time of the House with another word, further than to say that I most sincerely intend to give my vote against the Amendment.

Mr. CALLAGHAN was understood to express no disinclination towards the Government proposal so far as regarded sugar, but to reserve his opinion with respect to the proposed alteration in the differential duty on rum, which was a very different matter. The hon. Member urged the claims of the Irish distillers to that consideration and justice to which they were so fairly entitled.

Debate adjourned until Thursday.

House adjourned at a quarter past Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, June 27, 1848.

Minutes.] *Took the Oaths.*—The Lord Minster.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Glasgow and Greenock, against any Alteration in the Navigation Laws.—From Dissenters of Rufford, and several other Places, for the Prevention of the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on the Sabbath.—From the Magistrates and Town Council of the Burgh of Oban, in favour of the Law of Entail (Scotland).—From Falkirk, for the Rejection of the Marriage (Scotland) Bill, and the Registering Births, &c.(Scotland) Bill; and for Alteration of the Laws relating to Lunatics (Scotland).

THE WEST INDIES.

EARL GREY: My Lords, in pursuance of the notice which I have given, I rise for the purpose of moving—

> "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty to request that Her Majesty will be graciously pleased to order that there be laid before this House, Copies of Extracts of any recent Correspondence between the Secretary of State and the Governors of the Sugar-growing Colonies, as to the Distress now existing in those Colonies."

My Lords, the greater part of the despatches which I propose to call for, are included in papers which have already been laid on the table of the other House of Parliament. Your Lordships are probably, most of you, aware that it is reported, but I hope not correctly reported, that certain remarks have recently been made in the other House of Parliament in the course of a debate relating to the production of these papers. It is stated that I, as Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, have, in concert with my hon. Friend Mr. Hawes, the Under Secretary of State for the same department, endeavoured to mislead that Committee to which had been confided by the other House of Parliament the task of investigating the important question of the distress of the West India colonies. It is stated that we have deliberately concerted to keep back papers relating to the West Indies which favour the opinions of those who attribute the distress prevailing in those colonies to the Act of 1846, while every paper which could tend to lead to a contrary conclusion has been carefully selected and communicated to the Committee. I am sure that your Lordships will agree with me in thinking this a charge of so serious a nature, and one involving imputations so utterly disgraceful, that if it could be maintained, not only should I be utterly unworthy to continue to hold the station which I now hold in Her Majesty's Councils, but it would be the duty of your Lordships and of the other House of Parliament, by some formal and solemn proceeding, to mark your sense of such gross misconduct on the part of one honoured by the confidence of the Crown. My Lords, I say the offence is no less serious than this; because, what does it amount to?—Wilfully deceiving a Committee of Parliament by garbling the evidence which is brought before it. My Lords, to my extreme astonishment I am told — and it is absolutely impossible I could believe it if I had not been told —that a distinction is to be drawn upon this subject between that which is a personal imputation upon me, and an imputation upon me in my political capacity. I am sure your Lordships will agree with me in thinking that in a matter of this kind no such distinction can for a moment be allowed. And I am indeed astonished that any one, looking forward himself to hold office under the Crown, can really and seriously pretend that a Minister of the Crown, guilty of deceiving Parliament, or of an attempt to deceive Parliament, is not culpable personally for a crime and an offence far more serious and far more disgraceful than that of a poor man who, perhaps under the pressure of distress, commits some petty pecuniary fraud. In my opinion the offence of a Minister of the Crown so conducting himself is infinitely more disgraceful and more serious than that of any such petty criminal who may be compelled to stand at the bar of the Old Bailey. So I at least regard it; and I do hope and trust that it is not true that any Gentleman, looking forward himself to hold office under the Crown, could for a moment have suggested even the shadow of any such distinction existing as that which I have stated. But if it be a charge of this serious nature, I am sure your Lordships will concur with me in thinking that it is one which it is my imperative duty to lose not one moment I can help in bringing under your consideration, and of refuting, as I trust I shall refute it, in a manner that will defy all contradiction. My Lords, this charge I understand, has been founded upon what has occurred with reference to three despatches—one being a despatch received from Sir Charles Grey, dated the 21st of February last, and received at the Colonial Office on the 27th of March. It is complained that this despatch was wilfully kept back from the Committee, while the enclosure in this despatch was laid before it. Another despatch was one received from Sir Henry Light, late Governor of British Guiana; and the third despatch was one received from Lord Harris, the Governor of Trinidad. Now, with respect to Sir Charles Grey's despatch, I at once admit to your Lordships that it is one which ought to have been laid before the Committee; it is one which I fully intended should have been laid before it; and up to a recent period I never suspected that it had not been laid before the Committee. My Lords, I wish to show the evidence upon which I so state the facts; but before doing so it will make my statement more clear and intelligible, if I explain the ordinary course of business in the Colonial Office. The arrangement which has existed for many years—and I may observe, in passing, that it is an arrangement without which, or without some arrangement similar, it would be absolutely impossible for the great mass of papers that come under the consideration of that department to be disposed of; but the arrangement which has existed for many years is this—when a despatch arrives it is taken to that division of the Colonial Office to which it belongs, where it is opened and registered, and if there be any former correspondence relating to it is placed with it. It is then forwarded, in succession, first, to the permanent Under Secretary of State for the Colonial Department; from him it passes to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State; and, lastly, it comes to the Secretary of State himself. Each of those whom the despatch reaches makes such a minute upon it as upon examination he may think fit to append. It is desired that those minutes should, as much as possible, contain suggestions of what, in the opinion of each individual through whose hands it passes, ought to be done with regard to that despatch; so that all the ordinary business of the office may be disposed of by the Secretary of State himself by simply signifying his approval or otherwise of those suggestions. That being the ordinary course of proceeding, this particular despatch of Sir Charles Grey's arrived at the Colonial Office on the 27th of March. It was opened by the gentleman whose duty it was to open it—Mr. Cox; and this is his minute, addressed to Mr. Taylor, the senior of his department:—

> "This is the report for a copy of which the Committee on West India Distress have asked."

I would observe, in passing, that the Committee on Sugar and Coffee Planting had, some time before, asked for a copy of the report, by a Committee of the House of Assembly of Jamaica, upon the expense attending the cultivation of sugar in that colony. At that time we had received no report of the Committee of the House of Assembly. Subsequently a copy of the report was received, but without any evidence or any despatch from the Governor of Jamaica. That report had been ordered to be communicated to the Committee of the House of Commons; but a mere report, without any evidence, was comparatively an unimportant document. It was the evidence attached to that report which was of the greatest interest and consequence. When, therefore, this despatch reached Mr. Cox, he made this minute:—

> "We had a copy of the document in the Votes of the House of Assembly. It was to be sent to the Committee to-day. Would it not be better to send, instead, a copy of this despatch, which is important, with the report and evidence which we have got now for the first time? There are two copies. If so, it is desirable to send it to-day."

This bears Mr. Cox's initials, and is dated the 27th of March. The next minute was written by Mr. Elliot, to whom Mr. Cox addressed the despatch; and Mr. Elliot says—

> "I agree that this despatch ought to be given at the same time with the report and evidence to which it refers."

This is also dated the 27th of March, and bears Mr. Elliot's initials. The despatch was then addressed to Mr. Hawes on the same day—the 27th of March—who wrote on it "I agree." Then comes my minute. I wrote, "This may be laid before the Committee;" and I also suggested that the despatch would require to be answered with some care. There were some more important points adverted to—for my minute was rather long—and it was dated the 30th of March. Now, my Lords, of course, having made that minute, and directed the despatch and report to be laid before the Committee of the House of Commons, I never doubted but that that minute would be attended to. Your Lordships must know that it is physically impossible that the Secretary of State for the Colonies can look personally into the manner in which his orders are carried out. The multitude of despatches which are continually coming in and going out would render it utterly impossible. All through the progress of this inquiry, I never by any accident have seen any of the copies which were called for, and which were laid before the Committee. I have given directions in pursuance of the orders of the two Houses of Parliament, and I have always expected them to be complied with. I have invariably and implicitly trusted that those orders would be carried out; and I must say that the character of the gentleman whose duty it was in that department to see those orders obeyed, fully justified me in that confidence. But, undoubtedly, a mistake in this case has occurred—a mistake which it is not difficult to explain. At the same time, I am bound to say—because I should be sorry if I were to advance one single word beyond that which I was capable of proving—that when I state to your Lordships my perfect recollection of the impression which was made on me at the time, I am, after consulting with the gentlemen of the Colonial Department, confirmed in the belief that I can explain how that mistake occurred. Your Lordships will observe that my minute is dated three days after that of Mr. Hawes; and you will also observe that my minute contains a long direction as to the manner in which the despatch was to be answered. Now, as I could not give those directions until I had read the report of the Committee of the House of Assembly, and as that was a somewhat lengthy document, and as the mail was going out within three days, I gave verbal instructions at the time that there being two copies of the printed report, one of them should be sent at once to the Committee; and I said that I would forward the despatch as soon as I had done with it. As to the despatch, I find it was sent to me on the 28th of March. The minute of Mr. Hawes was dated the 27th, but as he only receives and peruses papers late at night, the probability is that I did not receive the despatch till the following morning. Well, having received both the despatch and the report, and having directed a copy of the report to be sent to the Committee, on the 30th of March I wrote the minute of the answer to be returned to that despatch; and I do not think it will be said that any great delay took place, when it is known that on the 30th of March I wrote the minute giving instructions what reply should be made to this despatch. My Lords, strictly in the ordinary course the gentleman who is the senior of the West India division of the Colonial Office (Mr. Taylor) prepared a draught of the answer, and at once forwarded it to me. That was on the 1st of April. When that draught reached me I did not inquire whether the despatch had already been copied and sent to the Committee. It since appears that it had not been sent; because the copying of it had been postponed until the draught of the answer should have been returned by me. But it happened that when the draught reached me it required a little more correction and deliberation than would admit of my returning it on the 1st of April; therefore, thinking that the despatch had already been copied and communicated to the Committee of the House of Commons, I put by the draught (the despatch requiring to be answered with some care), as I was anxious that the answer should not be copied until I had given it more mature consideration. I therefore put by the despatch for two or three days, and it appears to have passed from me on the 4th of April, when it went back to the division of the office to which it belonged. The report which the despatch enclosed having been already sent to the Committee, it certainly does not seem to be an unpardonable oversight that the despatch which ought to have accompanied it was not sent at the time. I believe the mistake arose in this way—I knew that it was of no use to send a single copy of the report which was enclosed in the despatch to the Committee; it was necessary that each Member of the Committee should have a copy, and therefore, it was sent to be printed. I sent the report on the 28th, in order that time might be saved by printing it, and I thought that when the despatch should be sent two or three days after, it would, in consequence of its being much shorter, be ready for delivery at the same time with the report. This undoubtedly is, to a certain degree, a conjectural explanation of the delay, but at the same time it is an explanation on the correctness of which I have the surest reliance; and, if so, I must say, not only for myself, but for the gentlemen employed in the department, that we are not justly liable to imputation for a mistake of this kind; more especially when I state to your Lordships that there were called for, in the course of this inquiry, by the House of Commons and the Committee, 308 despatches, and with respect to miscellaneous questions 295 other despatches, making a total 1630 printed folio pages, which had to be furnished by the department over which I preside, to the order of the Committee of the House of Commons. Under the pressure of business to that amount, I think that in common fairness it must be admitted that a mistake of this kind was not a very unnatural occurrence. But, whether the mistake occurred precisely in the manner in which I have stated, or not, this, at all events I can state, and to this I pledge my honour, that it was a mistake — that I and Mr. Hawes both firmly believed that the despatch had been communicated to the Committee. I say, my Lords, you cannot doubt that, unless you believe, what, indeed, I am told, has been suggested, that these minutes have been concocted since the subject was noticed in the House of Commons; that is to say—for upon these matters I think plain speaking is best—that Mr. Cox, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Elliot, Mr. Hawes, and myself have concurred in deceiving the House of Commons by a deliberate act of forgery. Upon that charge I will say no more than this—that I hardly know which is the more worthy to be despised, the man who, not entertaining that suspicion could express it; or the mind so lost to every generous feeling as to be capable of conceiving it. Another complaint is, that a despatch of Sir H. Light, received on the 24th of April, was not laid before the Committee, but that a short extract from it was communicated to them. I have no hesitation in saying that it was by my direction that the despatch was kept back, and the extract only given. I did not think it necessary that the despatch should be communicated to the Committee, for reasons which your Lordships may or may not deem insufficient, but which to my mind appear to be conclusive. On the 24th of April the Committee was supposed to have some considerable time before they closed their inquiry, and at that stage of the proceedings it was deemed much more convenient that whatever further information might be received from the colonies should be contained in the collection of papers which it was proposed to present to the House, unless, indeed, any of the documents happened to contain some new matter of peculiar importance. On looking at the enclosure of Governor Light's despatch, I perceived that it contained some rather curious matter bearing upon the subject of the Committee's inquiry, and therefore I directed that the extract containing the matter should be taken down to them; but the despatch itself I did not send, for it had only an indirect and very general bearing on the question the subject of inquiry; it contained statistical information, chiefly, no doubt, of an interesting character, but having little or nothing to do with the subject which the Assembly were assembled to consider. It is said that I suppressed the despatch, because it contained this passage:—

> "The cessation from labour at the present moment is partial. Many of the Creoles have returned to their usual occupation on estates; but while the average of produce throughout the province is 1 or 1½ hogshead per acre, it will be very difficult to compete with slave sugar. The crop of last year would have been remunerating had the prices kept up; on that of Berbice, as large as during slavery, but little profit has accrued. The difficulty of the planters is now increased by their not being able to raise money even on their sugars."

Now, I would be the last man to dispute the facts stated in that extract: they are perfectly notorious; and information to that effect would have been laid before the Committee to the fullest extent, if they had wished for it. The statement that the planters could not compete with slave-grown sugar whilst their produce continued to be 1¼ hogshead per acre, combined with the statements contained in the same despatch, that the system of manufacture in force in the colony was crude and imperfect, and that, under a different system, the produce might be doubled, instead of making against the views which I am supposed to have been anxious to press upon the Committee, forms the strongest possible argument in favour of those who entertain opinions adverse to protection. The case of the despatch from Lord Harris, the Governor of Trinidad, is of a similar character. No doubt that despatch was of great importance, and well worthy of the attention of both the Committee and the House of Commons, but it was not received until the 5th of May. The Committee at that time had already had two or three meetings for the purpose of considering their resolutions. The despatch reached me, as I find by a minute, on the 8th of May, and it happened that on that very day Lord G. Bentinck himself moved in the House of Commons an Address to the Queen for copies of or extracts from all despatches, bearing on the subject, received by the then two last mails from the West Indies, to be laid, not before the Committee, but before the House of Commons. The Motion would, I believe, have been made some days sooner had it not been for circumstances into which it is unnecessary for me to enter. This [*holding up a blue book*] is the collection of papers printed in consequence of that Motion; and if the Committee had waited until they were prepared, they might have had them; but they would have been detained a considerable time from the ultimate termination of their labours. This is the only reason why Lord Harris's despatch was presented to the House of Commons, instead of being at once laid before the Committee. An observation arises here which is so obvious that it is hardly necessary to make it. If dishonest concealment had been my object, I should undoubtedly have taken care that the papers were not laid before the House of Commons. It would have been quite as easy to suppress them from the House of Commons as from the Committee. If I had been guilty of an improper suppression of information as regarded the Committee, it would have been a good deal easier and safer for me to have persevered in concealment, and withheld the documents from the House of Commons, more especially as it was the vote of the House of Commons, not of the Committee, to which importance would be attached. The decision of the Committee was a matter comparatively unimportant, as it is sufficiently evidenced from this, that the only resolution they came to seems to be universally and by common consent abandoned. I find by the published Votes of the House of Commons, that the hon. Gentleman who voted for the resolution of the Committee gave notice of a Motion in the House of Commons, which was nothing short of the resolution agreed to by the Committee; but finding, I suppose, that he was not likely to be supported, he altered his Motion into one of a general censure on the proposition of the Government, in the hope of drawing into the lobby with himself all those who dissented from the plan of the Government, however opposite their views might be to his own. If, then, it had been my wish to deceive, it was the House of Commons, not the Committee, I should have selected for the object. My Lords, I am told, that since the charge was originally made, further charges of the same kind have been preferred against me relative to the suppression of some papers, and dishonest quotations from others. It is said, that I have quoted from a memorial of certain persons in Jamaica a passage in support of my own argument, and without reading the rest of the paper. Undoubtedly I did so; and I wish to know which of your Lordships ever made a speech in this House without quoting only these parts of a document which he thought important to his case? Having, a few days ago, seen the report of my speech upon the occasion referred to, I find that it is somewhat imperfectly given; but it is undoubtedly true that I quoted, in favour of my argument, certain facts from a memorial of certain persons in Jamaica. Those persons were complaining of the existing state of things in that colony, and of the distress under which they were suffering. My argument was, that the parties making that complaint had themselves admitted facts which, according to my views of the case, made very materially for the course of policy I had adopted. I did not trouble the House with reading the passage at length; I read the passage which I thought important to my argument, and nothing else; but the whole of that memorial, together with every other paper, was laid before the House of Commons, and is now accessible to the public. I cannot, without going into greater detail than I could expect your Lordships to listen to, refer more particularly to the despatches which it is said I have failed to present in due time to the Committee and the other House of Parliament. I therefore meet the allegation merely by the general assertion, that every call for papers made by the Committee or the House was obeyed with the utmost promptitude possible — considering the mass of documents with which we had to deal—and with the most perfect scrupulousness and good faith. I defy any man to search the archives of the Colonial Office, and to find there a single important line written on the subject bearing on either view of the question which has not either been printed at once without being called for, or in obedience to the orders of the other House of Parliament. My directions to the gentlemen of the Colonial Office were to take care that the fullest information should be furnished both to the Committee and the House. Such is the vindication I now offer to your Lordships of my conduct; but I will offer a very few further remarks before I conclude. I must confess, that when informed that I was charged with a practice so utterly disgraceful, the intelligence excited in my mind lively emotions both of astonishment and indignation; but a very little calm reflection dissipated the latter feeling. I soon felt that there was no real cause for anger, because, whatever had been intended, no real injury was done to me. I hope I shall not be deemed guilty of any undue presumption in saying, that having been now for nearly twenty-two years a Member of one or the other House of Parliament, having taken some share in public affairs, and having never before, during that period, had imputed to me a mean and dishonourable act, I think I have earned a character which is proof against such an attack as has been made upon me. I have so much confidence in the generosity and justice of my countrymen that I do not entertain the fear that they would lightly believe that by such conduct as that which has been imputed to me I would have disgraced myself and tarnished the unsullied honour of a name which I am proud to inherit, because I received it from one who was even more distinguished for his pure and irreproachable character than for his talents and public services. I feel that I cannot be injured by such an attack, and further that I ought rather to be obliged to the noble Lord for having directed it against me, inasmuch as it has given an opportunity to my friends to come forward in my defence with a generosity which, I assure them, I will never cease to hold in grateful recollection. I therefore feel that I can treat the attacks which have been made upon me—I will not say with contempt, because I wish to avoid any expression of angry feeling, but with disregard—convinced, as I am, that they must have elicited the censure of all highminded and honourable men, by showing that one who aspires to taking a leading part in the public affairs of his country is so ignorant of the manner in which those affairs ought to be conducted, as to bring down a great question of policy to the miserable ground of petty personality. Although I am not anxious for myself, I think I have a right to say that this system of personal attack and imputation upon the motives of public servants, is one that ought to be repudiated by your Lordships and the other House of Parliament. Let me remind your Lordships that this is not the first instance of the kind from the same individual. Two gentlemen of unsullied character have been accused on grounds as trivial as those on which this charge against me is founded. Mr. Porter has been accused of having deliberately drawn up a return in such a way as to deceive Parliament; and another gentleman is stated to have fenced with questions when under examination before a Committee, for the purpose, I suppose, of deceiving them. It is an offence against the best interests of the country to adopt such a system as this; it is one full of evil and danger. My Lords, hitherto in this country it has been our boast, that although party contests at times run high, as in all free countries they will do, yet upon the whole these contests have been conducted in an honourable and manly spirit, by fair discussion and argument. It has not been usual for charges of personal dishonour to be preferred by one public man against another, and, above all, it has not been the practice that a deliberate charge of violation of public duty, of fraud and falsification of documents, should be brought against a Minister of the Crown, unless it was the intention to make it the foundation of some solemn proceeding. Within the course of the last few years, the noble Lord opposite (Lord Stanley) filled the office which is now much more unworthily represented by me. It has been my misfortune to have thought it my duty to join those who have entered into a somewhat strong opposition to the policy of the noble Lord; but it never occurred to us, in conducting that opposition, to charge the noble Lord with withholding documents, and with unfairness or dishonourable practices. I never dreamt of any such thing; and yet, if any person had chosen to exercise a perverse ingenuity in collating passages from speeches in *Hansard*, with extracts from despatches in volumes of blue books, he would have had no great difficulty in making out a plausible case upon which to found such a charge as has been brought against me. When there is a desire to make such charges, and readiness to listen to them, there is no great difficulty in finding materials for them. Again, the noble Lord opposite has been in opposition as well as in office, and in opposition it has not been his habit to be particularly sparing in the severity of his criticisms upon his political opponents; yet I will do the noble Lord the justice of saying that in discussing matters of public interest, I have never heard accusations of this kind proceed from him. As far as I am aware, the noble Lord has always abstained from using the poisoned arrows of insinuation of personal dishonour. It is so very easy to bring these charges if there exists a disposition to do so, that in connexion with this subject I will just mention a fact which was communicated to me only a few minutes before the House assembled. Your Lordships may be aware that it is reported that in the discussion which took place on this subject in the other House, a great impression was made by the assertion that my Friend the noble Duke behind me (the Duke of Bedford) acted as chairman at a meeting of the Jockey Club which voted a testimonial for the zeal and perseverance which the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) had exhibited in exposing certain frauds. The fact was announced, as I am informed, by a friend of Lord G. Bentinck's, on the suggestion of the noble Lord himself. It happens curiously enough that this fact, so opportunely stated, and the stating of which made a great impression, turns out to be no fact at all. The authentic records of this transaction have been examined—I am stating this on the authority of the noble Duke—and it is found that not only was he not chairman, but that he was not even present on the occasion adverted to; and I believe that he did not attend a meeting of the stewards of the Jockey Club on the question until the funds had been diverted from their original object to a charitable purpose. How easy would it be for me to say that the principal actor in that transaction could not be ignorant of the real state of the case: he presumed upon the ignorance of his audience, and ventured on an assertion which, for the moment, produced great effect, taking his chance of the truth being subsequently made known. How easy would it be for me to take that course; but I disdain to do so. I say, and say most truly, that I firmly believe that in the excitement of the moment those who made the assertion believed it to be true. However ready they may be to believe that all who differ from them in political matters are capable of any conduct, however vile and disgraceful, I entertain no such feeling. I acquit them at once of such intentional deceit. But I call upon your Lordships to observe what proof is afforded by this mistake so committed by them at the very moment of charging falsehood upon another, how much care and abstinence there should be in bandying such charges from one to another. I believe it is impossible, with the tone of feeling which exists in this country, that any Minister of the Crown should be guilty of the conduct which has been imputed to me. The very gentlemen in his own department would refuse to assist or bear him out in such iniquitous proceedings. But, my Lords, if these accusations are to be bandied about from one to another—if these things are to be talked of as possible to be done—men's minds will gradually get used to think of them, and to believe that they are possible; and one of the great safeguards of the purity of the system of public administration in this country, of which we are proud, and which forms so great a contrast to what in other countries is known to take place—one of the greatest of those safeguards will be weakened or destroyed. My Lords, I say that the high character of public men is of the deepest importance to the country. How much of the moral strength of our institutions, of the power—I do not say of the Administration of the day, but of the Government in its widest sense, including both the executive and the legislative authorities of the State—how much of the power of Government in this country depends upon the general belief of the people of this empire that the public business is fairly and honourably transacted! My Lords, I think we have an awful warning on the other side of the Channel of the effects which a contrary belief is capable of producing. Is there any man who doubts that the sudden crumbling, in the midst of its apparent power and prosperity, of the Government of France in the month of February last, and the calamities and bloodshed which have since ensued—that all those frightful events which have startled and alarmed the whole of Europe—are in no small part to be attributed to the impression which, rightly or wrongly, justly or unjustly, certain unfortunate events and disclosures have latterly made on the public mind of France, that there was something corrupt and rotten in the manner in which the public affairs were managed, and in those in high places by whom they were conducted? The public confidence in those by whom affairs were conducted, whether in the Opposition or in the Government, had been shaken, if not destroyed. My Lords, I say that that was undoubtedly the case; and I ask if it is not a practice to be severely reprobated by your Lordships and condemned by the public, if we are to have introduced into our party contests this system of unfounded attacks upon the characters of public men, which, if adopted on the one side, cannot long go on without being followed by the other, and which, if it does go on—if the system is once established, must end in this, that the character of public men in general on both sides in politics will be lowered and degraded in the public estimation. These are the observations which I have to submit to your Lordships. I add nothing further but an expression of my hope that, in what I have said, I have executed that which I most earnestly desired, and that I have succeeded in avoiding the use of any of those expressions, or the uttering of any of those personalities, which I have so much condemned. The noble Earl concluded by proposing his Motion.

LORD STANLEY: My Lords, although I certainly cannot feel any wonder that the noble Earl should have desired to take the earliest opportunity which presented itself, or, if no opportunity presented itself, to make one for himself, for the purpose of vindicating himself and the department over which he presides from charges which have been made, not (permit me to say) against him in his personal, but against him and them in his and their official capacity, in another place—I yet regret that the noble Earl has felt himself compelled to make the statement which he has done; because, in the first place, the debate, as introduced by the noble Earl, and as it is necessary that it should be continued, is itself wholly irregular, and inconsistent with the orders and practice of your Lordships' House; but in the next place, and most of all, because it brings me very unwillingly into the position, while vindicating the conduct and the motives of a noble and hon. Friend of mine in another place, of appearing as that which I was least of all desirous of appearing to be—the accuser both of the department to which I had once the honour of belonging, and also of the noble Earl opposite, of whom at the outset permit me to say that, in his personal character, I believe him to be a man possessed of a sense of honour as high and blameless as any one of your Lordships. But, on the other hand, while I pay that tribute, which is no more than is due to the personal character of the noble Earl opposite, I must also claim for my noble Friend in the other House, the subject of the noble Earl's attack this night, that he also is a man of as high and unblemished honour as the noble Earl himself—as incapable of stating anywhere that which he did not believe to be the fact—as strenuous in supporting opinions which he believes to be well founded—and as fearless of the consequences to himself of the bold assertion of what he believes to be the truth—as any human being upon the face of the earth. I know not precisely what application the noble Earl conceives the reference which he made to the present state of affairs in France to have to the question now under your Lordships' consideration. And I confess it was with some surprise that I heard the noble Earl advert to another point, which, for the credit of some concerned, I should have thought that he would have been among the first to desire to consign to eternal oblivion, namely, the reference that was made in another place to pursuits in which my noble Friend was said—was known—to have been engaged. But I am not sorry, foreign as that whole question is from the subject of discussion now, that the noble Earl has introduced the topic, because it affords me an opportunity of bearing public testimony to the high honour and the disinterested character of my noble Friend. It was with some surprise that I heard it reported, that no insignificant individual, no person in a low and humble and unimportant position, but that the First Minister of the Crown had thought it consistent with the dignity of his station, consistent with the position which he occupies, and the respect which he owed to the audience he was addressing, to cast out against my noble Friend that anything base and sordid was analogous to the pursuits of that—I will not call it profession—but analogous to the character of those pursuits in which my noble Friend was known to have been engaged. And still more was I surprised when I heard that the noble Lord condescended to taunt my noble Friend with having been the instrument, as a member of the Jockey Club, of exposing, sifting to the bottom, and completely putting an end to one of the grossest and most disgraceful systems of fraud that ever was practised. The charge was, that the pursuit in which my noble Friend was engaged was one which was of a lowering and degrading character; and it was answered, and not unnaturally, that the noble Lord's nearest relation, the noble Duke himself, than whom there could not be a more high-bred or hon. Gentleman, was also engaged with my noble Friend, and without reproach, in these same pursuits; and that he, by his presence and his countenance, had borne testimony to the exertions of my noble Friend in defeating and exposing fraud. It may or may not be true that the noble Duke was in the chair at the time that a particular resolution was come to, expressing the thanks of the body at large to my noble Friend for his exertions in that matter; but this was the fact: That my noble Friend, with great personal exertion, at great expense to himself, at great inconvenience, and with great labour, was successful in exposing and destroying, with entirely disinterested motives, a disgraceful system of fraud; and those who were interested in the same pursuits, and who had the same desire to put an end to that fraud, in token of their approval, and of the feeling they entertained with regard to his exertions, voted a testimonial, for which I believe there was subscribed somewhere between 3,000*l*. and 4,000*l*., and one of the first subscribers to that testimonial in honour of my noble Friend was the noble Duke opposite (the Duke of Bedford), who is now cited as a witness before your Lordships. What was my noble Friend's course of proceeding? Gratified any man must have been by receiving such a testimony of a body of the gentlemen of this country. But my noble Friend, with that disinterestedness which is characteristic of him, declared that of the pecuniary testimonial he would not receive one shilling, but that the 3,000*l*. so subscribed should be devoted to form a fund for the relief of the widows and orphans of those persons who, ministering in a humble capacity to the pleasure and amusement of the patrons of the turf in England, had conducted themselves with uniform good conduct and character, and that the fund intended as a compliment to him should be set apart as an encouragement to such conduct. I beg your Lordships' pardon for occupying these few moments with this statement: certainly one of the last topics I expected to be called upon to discuss here was the proceedings of the Jockey Club, and the connexion of my noble Friend with them. I now proceed to the distinct charges which were made against the Colonial Office; not against the noble Earl personally or separately, but against the Colonial Office as a public body, in the performance of public duties. And I have yet to learn that if any public man in this or the other House of Parliament is of opinion that any public servant or any public board is neglecting or violating his or its duty, it is a breach of the ordinary courtesies of life that he should in his place as a Member of Parliament state his belief that such violation of duty is going on, and submit the grounds upon which he thinks he can substantiate the charge. Whether the person so charged be the Chairman of the Board of Excise, or whether he be a gentleman engaged on the part of the Board of Trade in preparing documents, which have had the effect certainly of misleading a considerable portion of the people of this country upon a very important question, or whether it be the noble Earl at the head of the Colonial Office, or the noble Lord at the head of Her Majesfy's Government, I hold that it is not only consistent with, but that it is the right and duty of a public man, without reference to personal feelings, to expose that believed delinquency, and that he is not to be told he is indulging in mean and petty personalities, if in the performance of his duty he thinks it necessary to take that course. Now, I will present this case to your Lordships, and I will follow the noble Earl through his statement; I will present it without heat or passion, and, if possible, without an aggravating expression. I do not stand here to vindicate every expression of which I am not cognisant, which may have been made use of elsewhere; I am here to state the charge which has been made. I am here to state the facts which appear to corroborate that charge, and to leave your Lordships to draw your own inference; I am not here to state whether that charge is well founded or not, but I am here to state facts upon which I think your Lordships will be of opinion that there was a ground for suspicion, which rendered it just and right that the case should be presented to the notice, and for the opinion, of Parliament. The charge is this—that systematically, for the course of the last year, the Colonial Office, presided over by my noble Friend—by the noble Earl opposite—has been in the habit, in the first place, of suppressing documents, or portions of documents, material to the due estimation and judgment of important political questions actually under consideration; and next, that the Colonial Office, and the noble Earl at the head of it, have been in the practice of perverting from their intention and meaning documents exclusively in their own possession, not accessible to others, and from those documents leading Parliament to inferences wholly alien from those which the documents themselves furnished. That is the charge, and I proceed now to state the circumstances under which the charge was made. All these statements have reference to the present alarming and distressing condition of the West India colonies. There were two periods in the course of the past year when it was more peculiarly important that Parliament should be in possession of the latest, the most accurate, and the most impartial information. One of these periods I take to have been that at which the affairs of the West India colonies came under discussion in this and the other House of Parliament immediately after Christmas—

in the other House upon the Motion of my noble Friend (Lord George Bentinck) for the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the state of those colonies; and in this House somewhat later, upon the presentation of certain petitions which I had the honour of laying before your Lordships, and to which the noble Earl made his reply; the other occasion when it was peculiarly important that accurate information should be furnished was, when the Committee appointed upon the Motion of my noble Friend were about to present to Parliament their report of the whole of the evidence taken, and their recommendation of the course to be pursued to save the West India colonies from utter ruin; and the charge is, that at those precise periods important information was not given which ought to have been given, and that documents were garbled in a statement made of them to this House in such a manner as to convey wholly erroneous inferences with regard to the contents of those documents. The first of these cases to which I would turn is the case which the noble Earl took first in his statement—that of the despatch from Sir C. Grey, received on the 27th of March. On the 27th of March the Committee had been appointed, which was presided over by my noble Friend with an untiring zeal and with an ability which obtained for him the admiration of all who witnessed those continuous and arduous labours; that Committee was on the point of closing the evidence, and proceeding to consider its effect; the main question, observe, between the Government and the West Indies being this—whether the distress which was universally recognised to prevail throughout those colonies, was to be traced to causes connected with the legislation of this country, or to the negligence, the apathy, the want of skill, of the planters themselves. At that period, on the 27th of March, Sir C. Grey, the Governor of Jamaica, sends over to this country a report, prepared by a Committee of the Legislature of Jamaica, accompanied by evidence as to the state of the distress, and the causes which they believed to have produced that distress, agreed to by a Committee of the House of Assembly, and accompanied by a despatch from Sir C. Grey himself, in which he refers to the general condition of the colony, and not only states his view of the causes of the distress, but states distinctly and plainly what is the measure which alone he conceives to be capable of relieving or even of alleviating that distress. That despatch was received on the 27th of March; the Committee closed their evidence on the 5th of April. On the 5th of April the Under Secretary of State was examined before the Committee. It had been matter of frequent inquiry, whether there were no general reports from the Governor of Jamaica with regard to the state of that colony, and whether, as the Governors of all the other colonies had transmitted accounts of the colonies under them, no such report had been received from the Governor of Jamaica. The question was distinctly put to the Under Secretary on the 5th of April. But not only was this document not forthwith laid before the Committee previous to the period at which they closed their evidence; but that document, all-important as it was, conveying the evidence of your own Governor, and the opinion of your own Governor as to the course to be adopted for the relief of the colony over which he was placed, and with whose welfare he was intrusted—that despatch was never laid before the Committee at all, although they continued their sittings until the 29th of May; and they came to their decision in ignorance of its contents, and of its existence. And now let me go further, and state, that it so happened that one of the questions studied in that Committee, and proposed to be reported on, was, whether there should be a differential duty of 10*s.* per cwt. imposed upon sugar, a duty of 20*s.* upon foreign, and 10*s.* upon British, as nearly as possible a differential duty of 1*d.* per pound; and that proposition was lost in the Committee, I think, by a majority of a single vote. Now, I ask your Lordships what effect might not have been produced upon this nicely-balanced Committee, if, at that time, it had been known by them that that very measure of a differential duty of 10*s.* per cwt. was the measure recommended by the Governor of Jamaica? That recommendation was in the hands of the Government; and, nevertheless, the Committee went to a decision upon that question in ignorance that such a communication had been received; and, moreover, with an excuse made for the Governor, that he had been but a little time in the colony, and had not had an opportunity to give his attention to the preparation of a report. Do not let me mislead your Lordships. I am stating what to a Member of the Committee must have been a strong ground of suspicion. I myself do not believe that that document was purposely withheld—I give credit to the assertion of the noble Earl opposite, and the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hawes) in another place, that the document was intended to be communicated to the Committee; and, knowing the course of proceeding in that department, and knowing that the minutes which are stated to appear upon the back of that despatch are precisely those which in the ordinary course of business would appear in reference to any such despatch, I have no doubt it was the intention of the noble Earl that that document should be communicated. But that that was a most important document you cannot fail to admit—that it was one directly bearing upon the very question the Committee were called upon to discuss, and upon which they had to decide. I confess that, with the knowledge of that fact, notwithstanding the character borne by the Under Secretary for the Colonies (Mr. Hawes) as an honourable and straightforward Gentleman, I cannot reconcile his answers before the Committee on the 5th of April. The despatch of Sir C. Grey stated, that unless a permanent *Gazette* price of 30*s.* per cwt. could be secured, he firmly believed that the greater portion of the sugar cultivation of the island would be abandoned; and Sir C. Grey then proceeded to recommend a differential duty of 10*s.* per cwt. On the 5th of April the Under Secretary for the Colonies was examined before the Committee. He was asked—

> "Can you explain the reason why we have no accounts in the papers laid before Parliament from Jamaica of the character of those from other colonies?"

He said in reply—

> "I imagine you allude to the blue book—to the annual account from Jamaica."

He was next asked—

> "There is no account of the state of the island, as in the other cases?"

And he replied—

> "That is generally comprised in the annual report called the 'blue book,' and that has not been received.
>
> "Does not the Governor write despatches to the Colonial Office on the subject of the state of the island besides that one particular paper in the course of the year?
>
> "Yes, certainly; but I am not aware of any despatches from him of any importance which have been withheld from the Committee."

["Hear!" *and cheers from the Ministerial benches.*] I am going to state this case with perfect fairness, and it was not necessary for noble Lords opposite to interrupt the statement I was about to make with that cheer; for I am willing to believe that at the time that answer was given, Mr. Hawes was under the impression that his statement was correct. But the examination went on:—

> "We have received from other colonies very considerable details as to the state of those colonies, and as to the prospects of agriculture; but from Jamaica I can find nothing of the kind?
>
> "Until very recently I think there has been no such general despatch received; that despatch is now printing for the Committee. I ought to add, that the Governor has been in the island a very short time.
>
> "That is preparing, is it?
>
> "There is a despatch, but still not of the nature to which the right hon. Gentleman alludes. However, whatever we have will be furnished."

Now, my Lords, I must say, considering the character of this despatch, when not one word had been said by any other person with regard to the blue book, and when the question was whether any information had been received as to the state of the colony, I cannot understand why the Under Secretary for the Colonies stated vaguely that a despatch had been received, but not of the nature alluded to—although, in point of fact, such a despatch had been received, instead of stating that within the last few days a most important document had been received which would furnish important information to the Committee. I confess I do not understand an Under Secretary's merely saying to a Committee, five or six days after the receipt of such a despatch, that until very lately no despatch had been received; that the despatch which had been received was then printing; but clearly leading the Committee to believe that such despatch had no important bearing upon the subject under their investigation. My Lords, I now come to another part of the case, which I must say, to the mind of any dispassionate person, gives a grave character of suspicion to the whole of this transaction; and I must therefore beg your Lordships' attention to what I am about to state. This despatch should have been sent before the Committee; and it is said, and I have no doubt truly, that the noble Earl opposite (Earl Grey) gave directions, on the 30th of March, that it should be laid before the Committee—but it was not laid before them. The Under Secretary was examined on the 5th of April, but he made no distinct reference to that despatch. The Committee met again, I think, on the 5th, the 9th, the 18th, the 22nd, and the 29th of May—seven weeks after the time at which the examination of the Under Secretary took place; but they did not come to a decision upon the merits of the case until the 22nd of May. On the 8th of May, I believe, a Motion was made in the House of Commons for an address to the Crown for all the latest despatches from the West India colonies. Now, my Lords, I say that, unless the business of the Colonial Office is carried on in a much more lax manner than used to be the case when I had the honour of being connected with it, it is morally impossible—not that the noble Earl himself, but that other parties, his subordinates, in collecting those further despatches to be submitted to Parliament, should not have perceived that the important despatch to which I have referred, and which was intended to have been sent before the Committee, had not been communicated to them. I conceive, also, that it is equally impossible to believe that, upon the discovery of such a material omission, instant steps should not have been taken to repair that omission, and to furnish the document to the Committee before they came to their decision. And yet, although these papers were moved for on the 8th of May, and the Committee did not come to any decision till the 22nd of May, and did not come to a final decision till the 29th of May, in all that time this blunder, this now acknowledged blunder, was not corrected by the Colonial Office. The Committee remained in the state of ignorance with respect to this document in which they had been from the first; and this document was first made known to the House of Commons in the Whitsuntide holidays. Now, my Lords, although I give entire credit to the statement of the noble Earl (Earl Grey) and of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hawes) that they did not intend, in the first instance, to withhold this document from the Committee, I say that its having been withheld formed a reasonable ground for suspicion, and that the fact of its not having been communicated to the Committee during the long interval during which the blunder must have been discovered, and might have been rectified, afforded strong ground for the suspicion that the Government were not very willing that—previously to the decision of the Committee—this document should be placed in their hands. But how will it add to the suspicion which has been entertained, and which is entertained, and which being entertained may be fairly and legitimately expressed, when we find that other similar circumstances have occurred with regard to other despatches and other colonies, and that at the precise period when it was most important that accurate information should be given. On the 24th of April—just before the Committee were on the point of coming to their decision—a despatch was received from the Governor of Demerara, containing several enclosures, and expressing his own opinion with regard to the distress of the colony, and the impossibility that the colonists, in their then condition, could compete with slave labour. This despatch enclosed a number of other documents; but there was one, and one only, of those documents, which was selected and sent down to the Committee; and that document, which was handed down to the Committee, without the accompanying documents, and the despatch commenting upon them, was the report of a stipendiary magistrate, charging the planters with gross apathy and negligence, and attributing to that cause the distress in which they were placed. Now, I say again, that this may be capable of explanation; but it is a subject of grave suspicion, that when the Committee were upon the point of coming to so important a decision, one enclosure only, and that a document favouring the views of the Government, and adverse to those of the planters, should have been selected and sent to the Committee at the very moment when it might have so great an effect in influencing the decision to which they were about to come. There may have been some discrepancy and difference of opinion between the noble Earl at the head of the Colonial Office and the Under Secretary; for I am informed that within the last 24 hours the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hawes) has expressed his regret that the despatch was not communicated to the Committee, and that in his judgment it ought to have been communicated to them, while the noble Earl to-night takes upon himself the full reponsibility of the despatch not having been communicated, and states that he thinks he was justified in withholding it, and that the Committee had no claim to see it. I now come to a third case, to which the noble Earl has referred—namely, that of the despatch of the 18th of September, received from Lord Harris, the Governor of Trinidad. At the commencement of the present Session of Parliament, in the month of November last, the hon. Member for Montrose moved for the production of the latest despatches received by the Government from the West Indies, and especially from Trinidad. The House of Commons sat, I believe, till the 23rd or 24th of December; yet, in all that time, although notice had been given that a Committee was about to be moved for by my noble Friend (Lord G. Bentinck) immediately after the recess, and although it was stated that the information afforded by these despatches would be most material in the discussions which might probably take place upon that proposal, these documents, moved for in the month of November, were not laid upon the table of the House of Commons till the discussion upon my noble Friend's Motion was in progress, when consequently they were utterly unavailable to any human being; and I believe they were not printed, and in the hands of Members, till that discussion had been brought nearly, if not quite, to a close. Now, my Lords, this may have been a case of inadvertence; it may have been a case of pardonable omission; but, when I read to your Lordships the language held by Lord Harris, I think you will be of opinion that this was a despatch which, before the state and prospects of the West India colonies were discussed, either in this or the other House, ought to have been placed before Parliament. The despatch is dated the 18th of September, 1847, and was received on the 22nd of October following; and this is the language in which Lord Harris speaks of the then state of the colonies:—

> "I have already mentioned to your Lordship the distress existing at this time in the colony, and which is increasing daily, and amounts to an unprecedented stagnation of business, the cases of which are constantly brought to my notice, namely, estates having the finest promise of a larger crop than was ever previously produced being almost abandoned from the want of means to pay for the necessary labour, are most distressing."

Again he says—

> "I have also stated the chief cause of this, which is, though it is to a certain extent produced by the state of the money market, that the prices received for sugar this year will not repay the cost of its production."

He goes on to say—

> "I do not hesitate to express to your Lordship my conviction, that if this colony is not to be left to subside into a state of comparative barbarism, which would result from the ruin of its larger proprietors, that some more than ordinary relief is necessary to support it in the contest in which it, in common with the other British West Indian colonies, is now engaged. Circumstanced as it is, I believe it incapable of successfully competing in the British market with the produce of countries in which slavery is still permitted, unless the advantages of free trade are conceded to it, as well as the disadvantages; and I would add, that relief should come speedily if it is to produce any effect."

I hold in my hand the copy of a despatch from Sir C. Grey, dated the 21st of September, 1847, and which was received by the Government on the 22nd of October, in which Sir C. Grey says—

> "I think it my duty to mention, that the low price to which sugar has recently fallen in the London market, without any corresponding reduction of duty, really threatens with ruin many of the planters who have latterly been struggling hard to keep their heads above water; and that I perceive indications of a movement within the island to support, in next Session of the Imperial Parliament, the party which asserts the principle of protection. It is not unlikely that, with this object in view, there may be an effort of the planters' party in the House of Assembly here to delay the annual revenue bills and the principal business of the Session of the island Legislature until after Christmas. My utmost efforts and most studious endeavours will be employed to persuade them to the most temperate and salutary course of action; but I cannot deny that, whilst corn and cotton are imported into the United Kingdom duty free, the duty of 14*s.* on the cwt. of muscovado sugar, which amounts to 66 per cent on the Kingston price, and which having been about 42 per cent on the London price, when the reduction of duty took place in March, 1845, is now about 56 per cent upon the latest London price, as given in the *Gazette*, is a very heavy toll to be paid by British consumers for admission into the home market; nor that there is a sincere apprehension amongst the persons most thoroughly acquainted with the subject, that with the present London price of West India sugar and the present rate of duties, it will be impossible to carry on here, without loss and ruin, the cultivation of sugar for exportation."

Now, my Lords, that document and the despatch from Trinidad were in the hands of the Government in the month of October, but the Trinidad papers were not laid before Parliament till the discussion to which I have referred had commenced—I believe, indeed, not until it had terminated, and the despatch I have just read was not laid before Parliament till the 28th of March, when it was placed in the hands of the Committee. On the 8th of February, these documents being in the possession of the Government, but not having been produced to the House, a question was put on the subject in the House of Commons, and an answer was returned, by an honourable, highminded, and most sincere man—the last man in the world to disguise, conceal, or colour any fact whatever—the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Labouchere). I will read the question and answer to your Lordships:—

> "Mr. Goulburn wished to know why Jamaica had been omitted in the statement of the affairs of the several West Indian colonies laid before the

House; and also, if there would be any objection on the part of the Government to lay the last intelligence from Jamaica on the table?—Mr. Labouchere said, that as the right hon. Gentleman had had the kindness to give him notice of his intention to ask the question, he had applied to the Colonial Office on the subject, and was enabled to state, that the reason no blue book had been laid on the table respecting Jamaica was that it had not been received. With respect to the latter part of the right hon. Gentleman's question, he had to say that no despatch had been received giving any general account of the state of Jamaica; but that as soon as such a document should be received, it was the intention of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to communicate it without delay to the House."

No general account from Jamaica had been received, and, therefore, the answer was apparently a compliance with the demand, as far as the Colonial Office could comply with it. Upon the latest intelligence from Jamaica, the fate of that island, as far as the discussions in the Committee were concerned, might be supposed to turn; and when we find it stated by one Minister, relying on the authority of his Colleague, the Colonial Minister, that no information on the subject of Jamaica was in the hands of the Government, while the Colonial Minister had in his possession, and had had for weeks, a despatch which stated that unless some relief was afforded, the cultivation of sugar in Jamaica must be given up —this is another point of strong suspicion with regard to the motives of the Government in withholding these documents. I hope the noble Earl will forgive me if I use a very humble simile to illustrate the position in which I conceive the noble Earl and his Colleagues are placed. The noble Earl has himself said that he considers, if he had been guilty of the conduct with which he is charged, he would be more criminal than many poor wretches who stand at the bar of the Old Bailey, and therefore I hope he will not be offended if I resort to the same source for an illustration. It is perfectly possible that any of your Lordships, or I myself, might have imposed upon us, and pass to some one else, a counterfeit piece of money; we might any of us pass, quite unintentionally, a bad half-crown; and I apprehend that if this were done by the noble Earl, by any of your Lordships, or by myself, no human being would suspect us of any improper motives. But if it turned out that, after passing one bad half-crown, an individual proceeded to pass half-a-dozen more, and was found with half-a-dozen counterfeit half-crowns in his possession, I apprehend these facts would very materially alter the appearance of the whole transaction, and that what might at first have seemed an act of inadvertence, would, in consequence of the subsequent disclosures, be deemed by a jury at the Old Bailey or elsewhere an offence committed with guilty knowledge. Now, though I sincerely acquit the noble Earl of intentionally withholding the first document, yet the suspicion engendered by the fact of its being withheld is materially augmented by the circumstance that documents of equal importance, containing ths same view of the question, and all on one side of the question, have not been produced, and that too precisely at the time when their production might have been attended with important results —results advantageous to the views of the planters, and disadvantageous to those of Her Majesty's Government. But, my Lords, I now approach, and I do so with great pain, another part of this subject. All that has hitherto passed is applicable directly to the conduct of the Colonial Office, and not directly and personally to the noble Earl, for it is impossible to say who is responsible for these impositions upon Parliament, if they have been impositions, or for these neglects and blunders, if they have been a series of blunders. But the subject to which I am now about to call your Lordships' attention is one which personally concerns the noble Earl. My Lords, on the 7th of February—the noble Earl himself has alluded to the subject—and I am justified in referring to it after the strong declaration the noble Earl has made about guilty suppression of documents for the purpose of misleading Parliament—on the 7th of February, I felt it to be my duty, in presenting various petitions complaining of the distressed condition of the West Indies, and suggesting different remedies, to call your Lordships' attention to the state of the colonies at some length; and I expressed what was then, and is now, my opinion, namely, that the bulk of that distress had been occasioned by acts of the British Legislature, and more especially by the Act of 1846, which introduced slave-grown foreign sugar into unlimited competition with our colonial sugar. In replying to me on that occasion, it was the object of the noble Earl (Earl Grey) to show that, admitting the distress under which the colonies laboured, that distress was not attributable, or at most only partially, to the causes to which I had ascribed it, but to many other causes, among which the noble Earl more especially adverted to the waste and extravagance in the management of property, to the great number of absentee proprietors, and to the neglected condition of the estates. In the course of his speech the noble Earl referred to a document which he held in his hand, and which he styled, I think, a most able and admirable despatch, from Governor Higginson, of Antigua, every line of which deserved the attention of Parliament. Now, my Lords, if I am not mistaken, that able and admirable despatch was not at that time, nor for two months afterwards, communicated to this House, although I believe it was placed in the hands of the Committee of the other House of Parliament. But on the occasion when the noble Earl adverted to this able and admirable despatch, he omitted to state that it contained these words, which deserve the serious attention of your Lordships: "It must be conceded that, for obvious reasons, free-grown sugar can never yield so lucrative a return as that produced by the labour of foreign slaves." Now, my Lords, the noble Earl holds a doctrine which I admit is capable of being defended, and which may be acted upon, and has been acted upon, by every Government, namely, that the Government must use their discretion in giving to Parliament extracts from despatches they have received, omitting from those despatches such passages as it would be inconvenient and mischievous to the public service to lay before Parliament. But, my Lords, if the noble Earl extends that doctrine, as he seems inclined to do, and if he defends his own proceedings on the ground that Government should lay before Parliament just so much of despatches as may suit their own views, and exclude every despatch and everything that is counter to those views—then the doctrine promulgated by the noble Earl confirms and strengthens the charge made against the Colonial Office in the House of Commons, namely, that they have adopted the principle of suppressing and perverting information which they had in their possession, but which they have not communicated to Parliament. Extracts from despatches must always be made, but it is the solemn duty of the Minister to take care that the extracts he gives afford a fair and impartial view of what the despatch contains on both sides, and enable Parliament to judge on the merits of the case as clearly and plainly as if the whole despatch was before it. But, my Lords, what shall we say of a Minister—and I regret to have to say it of the noble Earl opposite—who, holding in his hand a document the whole gist and bearing of which are in one sense and in support of one particular view— [Earl GREY: Hear, hear!] I am speaking now not of the despatch of Governor Higginson, but of the memorial, which excited great attention on the part of the noble Earl, and from which he read some extracts to your Lordships; and I am about to show that not only were they not fair extracts, but that they involved an inference directly and diametrically opposite to the whole tenor of the memorial itself; and that the next sentence, which the noble Earl did not read, would have utterly annihilated the inference which he sought to lead your Lordships to form. The noble Earl, adverting to the causes of distress in the West Indies, and reckoning among them absenteeism, proceeded on the 7th of February to say—

> "A very great change was going on in the West Indies at the present moment. Among many documents which had passed through his hands connected with the state of these colonies, he was very much struck with one which he had received the other day from a number of planters in the western part of Jamaica, and who stated that they had invested capital to the extent of not less than 142,000*l.* in plantations in the colony; and they added—what was a most remarkable fact—that, with one exception, they had all purchased or leased their plantations since emancipation."*

I suppose I am not misrepresenting the noble Earl when I infer that the memorial I now hold in my hand is the precise memorial to which the noble Earl in that speech referred; it proceeds from the undersigned owners of nineteen and lessees of thirteen sugar estates in the western part of Jamaica, and states—

> "We are resident proprietors, and all, with one exception, have purchased and leased our property since the Emancipation Act."

I think that this circumstance, added to the amount of the capital mentioned in the memorial, which very nearly corresponds with the statement made by the noble Earl, sufficiently identifies this memorial with the one which the noble Earl referred to on that occasion as a proof of the great and beneficial change going on in the cultivation of Jamaica, and to show us what was the change and progress in that island. The noble Earl said—

> "He believed that in the course of a few years

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* Hansard (Third Series), vol. xcvi. p. 209.

more they would see the soil of Jamaica cultivated by planters carrying on business for them, and forming resident owners or lessees of the land. So far from believing that the prospects of Jamaica were bad, he was not aware of any part of the British dominions in which there was so favourable a prospect for the investment of capital at this moment as Jamaica."

The noble Earl endeavoured to lead your Lordships to the conclusion, that in consequence of this great change in respect to resident proprietors, the prospects of Jamaica were far from being unfavourable—that its example would be followed, and that the other colonies would be in the hands of resident proprietors—and that Jamaica, moreover, offered such a field for the employment of capital as rendered it not second to any place in the British dominions. The noble Earl expressed that opinion, and led your Lordships to entertain the same opinion; and, as far as he could, induced the country and the capitalists of the country, to entertain it. Yet this which I am about to read is the statement of those identical parties, which statement the noble Earl, when expressing those sanguine expectations, held in his hand, but did not communicate to your Lordships. They state, so far from expecting any return for the 142,000*l.* which the noble Lord stated that they had invested, that the price of sugar at the present time is such that their produce would only give them a gross return of 60,800*l.*, to be placed against an annual expenditure of 60,300*l.*, leaving a balance over expenditure of only 500*l.* and odd, to go against the interest of the annual outlay, and precluding the recovery of a single shilling on the original investment. The noble Earl tells your Lordships, without reading the facts, that he expects great prosperity to arise from the system of resident proprietors, and that this example will be followed by hundreds; while these memorialists state, after detailing the facts which were in the knowledge of the noble Lord while he made his statement, that—

"We are resident proprietors, and all of us, with one exception, have purchased and leased our properties since the Emancipation Act. It will be evident, from the facts stated, that we cannot cultivate for another year; indeed, we have not the means, unaided, of taking off the present crop; and the British West India merchants are now unable to assist us, and of course disinclined, where there is no hope of profit, or even of recovering their advances. If we, being proprietors and lessees, living on and managing our own properties, brought up to tropical agriculture, and availing ourselves of every practical improvement, have only such a result to exhibit as is set forth in the statement of these facts, the inference is conclusive that the position of the absentee proprietor or mortgagee, represented by paid agencies, is still more deplorable. It is evident that unless some mode of suppressing slavery and the slave trade more effectual than that hitherto pursued be adopted, and without immediate aid, in the shape of money loans, sugar cultivation, upon which 300,000 of the emancipated negroes are wholly dependent, must cease in Jamaica. But our object in submitting these facts to your Lordship, is to enable you to draw your own inferences, and suggest your own remedies; and we beg you will consider our desperate position as an excuse for troubling you with the statement."

Could these parties believe, that when they state their object and exhibit their desperate condition to the Secretary of State for the Colonies—he who is the natural protector of their interests, who should watch over them and the colonies, taking care that they sustain no injury from the course of British legislation—could they believe that the noble Earl, with this statement in his hand, would come forward and read a portion of the document, and withhold the remainder, leaving your Lordships to infer, from the portion he did read, that this experiment of resident proprietors was eminently successful, when the parties told him that they could not cultivate for another year? Could they believe that he would assert that no part of the British dominions afforded such encouragement for the employment of capital, when he had a proof in his hand that many resident proprietors, in attempting to carry this plan into effect, had lost 142,000*l.* capital sunk, and were receiving no return sufficient to meet the interest on their annual outlay? I have followed the noble Earl through the whole of his statement, and leave it to your Lordships to say how far the noble Earl was justified in that tone of high indignation at any suspicion being entertained in which he had thought it necessary to indulge. I do not ask your Lordships to say that there has been a wilful suppression of truth, or to say that there has been a perversion of documents to purposes the very opposite to those for which they were intended; but I do say that I have demonstrated to your Lordships and to every fair and candid man, that under the circumstances as I have stated them, and as they are reported to have occurred, it is not surprising that a man like my noble Friend (Lord G. Bentinck), who has devoted himself heart and soul to the cause of the West India interest, and who presided over the Committee with unexampled assiduity—who, on this as on every other occasion, is most anxious to arrive at the truth—should feel deeply hurt that facts, a considerable portion of which were favourable to his views, should be intentionally or unintentionally withheld from the Committee; and, looking to all the circumstances, should in the performance of his duty as a Member of Parliament, and as Chairman of a Committee to which an important inquiry had been delegated, express in strong and warm terms—too strong perhaps for the occasion, in the absence of entire and conclusive proof—his impression that there were circumstances of grave suspicion attending the manner in which the business of the Colonial Office had been carried on for a considerable time. In making these charges, then, my noble Friend was not descending unduly, as the noble Earl stated, to mean and petty personalities. He was taking the course, in the statements he made, which in fair argument he was justified in taking, and which ought to have been met by fair argument. The noble Earl or the Government ought not to be offended with the plainness of his statements; and the noble Earl may consider himself well out of this matter if he satisfies your Lordships and the country that he is altogether clear from the charge of having communicated, through partial extracts, to your Lordships, an inference on an important case very opposite to that which was intended to be conveyed by the documents in his hand.

Lord BROUGHAM said, he must protest against the feeling which seemed to prevail among their Lordships on this question, while he deeply regretted that anything had arisen in another place to make it necessary for the noble Earl to have gone so far out of the ordinary course of proceedings as to bring the matter before their Lordships. He regretted it, because it gave rise to what must be allowed to be a most inconvenient breach of the Standing Orders of Parliament, which in general terms declared that they ought not to debate in one House that which was uttered in the way of speech in the other. But this charge against the noble Earl had been made in public, against him as a public man; and it was natural that he should feel himself called on at the very earliest occasion to defend himself against that charge in the House of which he was a Member. Did he blame Lord G. Bentinck, if the reports which the noble Earl (Earl Grey) had quoted were true, for having adverted to the subject, and for having called on the Colonial Office to defend itself against the charges he thought himself justified in making? No; far from it. It was consistent with his rights and privileges as a Member of Parliament to have done so. Furthermore, it was consistent with his duty to have done so, seeing that, in his opinion, a serious breach of duty on the part of an officer of the Crown had been committed. He (Lord Brougham) understood from the statement of the noble Earl, as well as from that of the noble Lord, that whatever was most offensive in these charges had been retracted, and to a great extent apologised for. There had been circumstances of great suspicion in the transactions which had taken place; but by the statement of the noble Earl on that occasion, and by the statement of the hon. Gentleman his Colleague (Mr. Hawes) in the other House, these circumstances had been satisfactorily explained. He did not think that there was anything suspicious in the answers given by Mr. Hawes. It had been asked, how did Mr. Hawes happen to state that there was no despatch giving a general account of the deplorable state of Jamaica, when he knew that despatch existed? Now, Mr. Hawes never doubted that that despatch had gone to the West India Committee, and he was under the impression that the Members of that Committee must know what it contained. Therefore, it would be wholly in vain for him to try to deceive the Committee, and to say that the despatch bore one character when he believed it had another, as he would have felt that he must be convicted of misrepresentation; for Mr. Hawes fancied at the time the Committee were in possession of the despatch. Another remark of the same sort applied to the noble Earl opposite in respect to Governor Light's despatch, the noble Earl opposite being charged with displaying a *curiosa felicitas* in picking and choosing from it whatever made for him, and keeping back whatever made against him. How stood the facts? Why, that those portions of Governor Light's despatch which had been kept back, appeared, when they were made known, to support instead of assailing the arguments of the noble Earl (Earl Grey). He (Lord Brougham) was friendly to free trade, except in slaves; but this he must say, that if Governor Light's despatch had been placed before the Committee in its entirety, it would have made for, rather than against, the noble Earl, and the view he took of this question. Next, there was a charge of having drawn unfair inferences from a memorial, which would have given a different impression if it had been laid before Parliament at length and entire. All the document was not laid before Parliament; and, without charging any one with a wilful suppression of it, it was quite easy to suppose it probable that it did not occur to the noble Earl to give it entire, or he would have done so. They must all admit that, though the latter part of his noble Friend's (Lord Stanley's) able address dealt with the business before the House, all the other portions of it were entirely personal. He deeply regretted the necessity of it. For two hours their Lordships had been occupied with a proceeding in itself entirely irregular; they had been engaged in discussing the conduct of a Committee of the House of Commons; they had been discussing the debates in the House of Commons, and the speeches in the House of Commons, the tenor of those speeches, and the conduct of Members of that House in matters purely relating to the privileges of a Committee of the same body—the manner in which the Committee on the West Indies had been dealt with by the Colonial Office. He deeply lamented the necessity, and he hoped he never should see such a debate as that again. He hoped he never should have occasion to excuse another, as he excused the noble Earl, for his natural anxiety to bring such a subject before them; for he held it strongly that greater caution, a wiser forbearance, more temper, and, above all, more attention to previous example, should be used by Members of the Legislature, or of any other body, in charging public officers with public wrongs or breaches of public duty; or in charging private individuals with private wrongs or breaches of private duty. All that had been so unhappily done had sprung from no personal motives—it had arisen from no unworthy feelings of any kind; but from a sense of public principle—from large and liberal views—and from the strictest sense of duty; above all, from those high and honourable feelings which he believed and knew existed in the conduct and took part in the character of his noble Friend, Lord George Bentinck, and from which, unless detached by some sudden emotion in the course of debate, he never would have departed. If, then, he (Lord Brougham) were right in supposing that all was as blameless and as right in the Colonial Office as he trusted it was —and if he were equally right with respect to the motives of those who brought the matter forward, and that it was in them as much the result of principle as of anything else—he thought the matter should here be allowed to rest; and that the charge having been made and rebutted, and the offensive words attached to the charge having been withdrawn, the subject should be considered as fully argued, and that what had happened there that night should not give rise to a scene equally disorderly elsewhere, or to attacks on the speeches in their Lordships' House, and on the occurrences that had taken place there. The noble Earl had fully, clearly, and satisfactorily defended himself. He had also fully, clearly, and satisfactorily defended and explained the conduct of his subordinate in office; and he had done so without, in his (Lord Brougham's) opinion, making any charge against any one whatever. He did not conceive that one word of his statement was such as required any answer or defence from Lord George Bentinck, or any one else; and he hoped and trusted that now and for ever there would be an end to the unfortunate discussion. He did not think he should be discharging his duty to the public service if he sat down without making an observation which had most powerfully impressed itself upon his mind during the course of the debate. When they heard of the enormous mass of business which overpowered the Colonial Department—when they heard that the average amount of despatches received in a year, all of which were to be duly read, extracted, noted, and answered, was between 10,000 and 11,000, or about 200 a week—they might easily conceive what must be the difficulty of carrying on that immense body of business, and to read and digest such a mass of papers in any department of State, such as the Home Office or Board of Trade, dealing only with matters of municipal law well known to them all; but when it was considered that those colonial despatches dealt with the affairs of States at the other side of the globe, and with the extended possessions of an empire on which the sun never sets—when it was known that twenty-nine of these colonies were under twenty-nine different systems of laws, some the very opposite to the rest in principle and practice—gracious Heaven! did it not strike them that they must afford help to that department, and that it had become indispensably necessary to increase the staff of those employed in it? Who would ensure to him that there had not been errors of a similar kind with respect to other colonies, which, if unknown and uncorrected, might and would do irremediable damage, and which it would take months to discover, the error having been committed in conning despatches by the next packet? He threw out that suggestion as the only practical and perhaps the only valuable result of the debate. But with respect to the conduct of the noble Earl himself, he would allow him (Lord Brougham) to say that he was not more convinced after hearing his statement than he had been before it, of the purity of his part in these transactions, and of his perfect freedom from all blame or suspicion. He might sometimes have the misfortune to differ with him; but he well knew him to be incapable of such things as had been imputed.

Earl GREY: My Lords, I ought to begin the few observations with which I think it necessary to trouble your Lordships, by saying that I am much obliged to the noble and learned Lord opposite for the manner in which he has addressed himself to this subject, the way in which he has spoken of my conduct, and the testimony he has borne to it. I am at the same time desirous of assuring your Lordships that I feel most sensibly the spirit in which you have received all observations which connected themselves personally with me. I need scarcely remind the House, that the noble Lord opposite contended that it was alike the right and the duty of Lord G. Bentinck—if he thought that the duties of the Colonial Office were in any respect neglected—to bring the nature and causes, and the authors of such neglect, under the notice of the House of Commons. I am by no means unwilling to admit the existence of that right, and the obligations which that duty imposes; but I take the liberty of saying that there is a great difference between discussions and professions on the one hand, and deeds and motives on the other; and I think I may be permitted to observe, that there is some difference between the manner in which subjects of this nature are usually brought forward, and the way in which the noble Lord (Lord George Bentinck) brings them before Parliament. I observe that he never enters into the discussion of any great public measure without imputing vile and disgraceful motives to all his adversaries. I wonder it never occurred to the noble Lord that I should not be less anxious than he or any other noble Lord to avoid the remotest chance of any such motives being imputed to me, and that I should be not less anxious than he to promote that which I conscientiously believed to be the true interests of the country. I can assure the noble Lord and the House, that while I continue to hold my present office, my constant study shall be, as it ever has been, to devise and carry into practical effect every measure which seems calculated to promote the advancement of the colonies and the true interests of the mother country. But unfortunately the noble Lord, for some strange reason, seems to assume that my object is to depress and damage the West India colonies by unfair means. Now, I really cannot help asking whether it would not have been possible to discuss the question of protection for sugar without entering into the further question whether I and those who support me, and who are my Colleagues in office, did not endeavour to promote views ruinous to the West India colonies by means inconsistent with all fair and honourable principles? I must protest, my Lords, against this practice of suspecting the motives of public men, and this habit of some Members of Parliament of imputing evil intentions to their adversaries. My Lords, I heard with great regret the noble Lord opposite—and it has greatly altered my opinion of his character and the sentiments with which I have been accustomed to regard him—I repeat, that it was with great regret I heard him adopt the views of his political allies, and address himself to the present question with all the ingenuity, all the ability, all the energy, for which he is remarkable above most men, and combining with these qualities, give me leave to say, all the arts of the most practised advocate, for the purpose of convicting me of that which I cannot regard otherwise than as a charge of intentional prevarication. I need scarcely say it was most distressing to my feelings to see him taking the utmost pains for the purpose of accomplishing that object; and not less painful was it to me to observe that he adopts that distinction between the personal and the official character of public men, which I altogether repudiate. I conceive that the personal and official conduct of men holding high stations cannot be fairly separated; and I maintain that these charges are not brought against the office, but against the man; further, I have little difficulty in saying—from what little experience I have had of public life—that men who shrink from the commission of unworthy deeds, shrink also from lightly accusing others of any grave offence. Though most unwilling to prolong the personal part of this discussion, so far as it bears upon my own individual conduct, I cannot help noticing what fell from the noble Lord at the beginning of his speech with respect to my noble Friend in the other House (Lord John Russell,) and in so adverting to it I cannot help expressing my strong surprise that the noble Lord should have adopted so ungenerous and mean a view as he has put forth of what is reported to have fallen from my noble Friend upon that occasion. The noble Lord opposite imputed to Lord J. Russell that he had accused Lord G. Bentinck of having derived from his pursuits on the turf, habits which he held to be inconsistent with personal honour. I utterly deny on the part of my noble Friend (Lord J. Russell) that he ever made any such charges, or threw out any such imputation. Indeed it would have been most strange if my noble Friend had so spoken, considering the near and dear relation of my noble Friend to a noble Duke, who has, I believe, just left this House—it would have been most strange if Lord John Russell should have been the man to cast a general censure upon the pursuits of the turf, it being well known that the noble Duke to whose name I have just adverted has given to those pursuits the sanction of his influence and example. My noble Friend did no such thing. We all know that racing is often followed from the love of an ancient and manly sport—from the love, likewise, of the noble animal employed in that amusement. We are equally aware that thus carried on, it is a harmless pastime, and contributes to important national interests. But is it not, at the same time, perfectly notorious that racing is followed, not only as an honourable and manly sport by gentlemen of the highest character, but that others make it a calling, or, as a noble Lord said, a profession; that, in a vile spirit of gambling, men carry on the business of the turf in a manner as unworthy as is the practice of picking pockets; that their habit is to bet upon horses which they know can never start; that they pay for information; that they literally practise bribery, in order to secure the secrets of the stables; and that the greed of money often induces them to descend even to more direct cheating. These are amongst the offences of the turf; but my noble Friend never said, or even insinuated, that Lord George Bentinck, by being brought into contact with persons who practised those crimes, had been in any degree infected by their company or example. It is quite true, and perfectly well known, that Lord G. Bentinck conducted an inquiry of great importance, for the purpose of exposing those practices, upon an occasion of not very distant date; that, with great perseverance and ability, he detected some of those frauds. Now, the effect of what my noble Friend said was, not that Lord George Bentinck contracted any vileness in exposing villany, but, that he had contracted habits of suspicion—that, like the detective police, who are always upon the track of delinquency, he imagined crime where crime had no existence. That and that alone was what the noble Lord did mean by the language he used on that occasion. I conceive an assertion of that kind to be perfectly fair and legitimate—to be an argument in all respects just and allowable; and I will go somewhat further, and say, that if in the heat of argument my noble Friend was betrayed into any ill-considered expression, and went beyond the bounds which Parliamentary usage prescribes, it formed a striking exception to his general habits; and I venture to say that no one is more entitled to admiration than he is for the manner in which he endures attacks made upon himself. On such occasions his character stands out a striking example of patience, temper, and forbearance. It is well known that attacks the most irritating he has sustained without betraying any unnecessary heat; and if in reference to this he showed something of the indiscretion of a generous mind, let it not be forgotten that he did so in repelling charges made against an absent friend. I am surprised, therefore, that the noble Lord opposite, whom I used to think capable of high and generous feelings, should not have judged the conduct of my noble Friend in this light, and that he should, on the contrary, have been capable of coming down to your Lordships' House to represent his words in a meaning which they did not bear, and to swell the cry that has been raised against my noble Friend on this account. I do affirm that this is unworthy of the noble Lord. I feel I must be content, with respect to the greater part of what has been said by the noble Lord in his address, to throw myself upon the House. I am bound to admit that I do not feel myself equal as an advocate to the noble Lord, and that I am not as able to draw inferences from garbled extracts and detached dates and sentences as he is.

I have not memory, if I were able in other respects, to follow him through the details of his speech; and, on a question of this kind, naturally agitating to my feelings, I do not feel I am capable of unravelling that ingenious web of sophistry he has thrown over this subject, which I think I could do if I had time—because I must say, that skilful as the noble Lord is in the art of dressing up a case for Parliament, never did I know him to show his skill more than now, when his object was to drive home the poisoned arrow to be discharged at me. I shall, however, address myself to some of the details of his statement. The first point was, that I had not laid the despatches of the Governors of Jamaica and Mauritius before the House of Commons in sufficient time to throw light on the inquiry then going on. There was not time to have the papers printed before the recess, but they were laid on the table of the House the very day the Parliament met. I have lying before me the Votes of the House of Commons, which show that on the very first day after the recess they were put into the hands of Members. The noble Lord never said this; he said I kept them back—

LORD STANLEY: No, I beg the noble Earl's pardon; what I stated was this, that these papers were not laid on the table before the House of Parliament till the debate had commenced on the subject to which they referred, and had not been printed and placed in the hands of Members till its conclusion.

EARL GREY: That day, the 3rd of February, being the earliest day on which it was practicable to print them, they were laid on the table of the House; and I certainly cannot speak in a positive manner of this, but my belief is they were delivered to be printed at the time. The next point of the noble Lord's was the way in which I dealt with the despatch of Governor Higginson, in taking from it certain extracts, and not the whole. Now, in respect to this subject I must direct your Lordships' attention to the fact, that I consider the opinion of Governors and of other persons in the colonies of much importance in such matters as relate to facts; but that I do not regard their statements in so far as they relate to mere opinions as of so much moment. I think that we at home are more apt to take enlightened views of affairs, and that from longer study of such matters, and perhaps far better opportunities of judging, we often take sounder views of the conclusions to be drawn from facts, than do those who furnish those facts to us. I, therefore, quoted this despatch for what I thought it was worth. Its contents were communicated with that view, as soon as was convenient, to the House. If any question were about to be brought under the consideration of the House, connected with it, the despatch would have been laid before them at once; but no such occasion or opportunity occurred till two or three days after the rising of Parliament; and the despatch was, I believe, among the very first papers called for, and placed in their hands after their reassembling. With respect to Jamaica, great stress has been laid on the circumstance of my keeping back a despatch received on the 22nd of October from Sir C. Grey, Governor of that colony. That despatch, my Lords, stated what was perfectly notorious to all of us—the existence of great distress among the planters; and Sir C. Grey further stated, he thought some changes in the duty were necessary. But this, my Lords, was no secret at all, for Sir C. Grey had expressed the same opinion in his speech on the opening of the House of Assembly at Jamaica—a speech which was copied into every newspaper in England. It would then be perfectly childish to think of deceiving the House of Commons on such a matter as this. The last point in the noble Lord's speech to which I feel myself equal to advert at present, is the case of the Jamaica memorialists. The noble Lord says I quoted extracts from it to promote certain views which I think advantageous, but that I did not quote the whole of them. I have not now my speech before me; but it is easy to see, from the report which the noble Lord read of it, that it was a memorial presented to me, complaining of great distress, and—what I am certain made the document valuable in my eyes, and what made me quote it to the House—on the part of the complainants, of the actual state of things, admitting facts which, in my mind, led to conclusions with respect to the future of the most important character. These facts were, that in parts of Jamaica a very considerable change had taken place on some estates, and that a set of resident owners and cultivators were growing up on their own properties. For this alone was it I quoted the memorial at all. I did not enter into the consideration of the state of present distress in Jamaica, because the whole tenor of my argument was—undoubtedly there is distress among the planters—undoubtedly they are in serious difficulties—but at the same time I contend there are circumstances connected with the colonies which must lead to final improvement. I adopt the testimony of the memorialists as to facts. I do not adopt their testimony as to opinions. I do no more take for granted all that they said about the possibility of cultivating sugar in Jamaica, than I did that which has been said by the noble Lord, and by the farmers here, about the possibility of cultivating wheat in this country. In both instances I ventured to judge for myself. Notwithstanding the strong opinions of those engaged in the cultivation of land here, I judged for myself. I was equally justified in judging for myself, notwithstanding the strong opinions of those engaged in cultivating land in Jamaica. You may think me wrong in my view of the argument to be drawn from this memorial; but, according to the best of my judgment, the memorial taken as a whole supports that argument better than when viewed only partially; and this memorial, I may add, was laid before the Committee at a very early stage of its proceedings. I do not mean to enter further into these topics; and can only say that what has fallen from me has been extorted from me. I did not willingly enter into this discussion; and, as far as rests with me, I have no wish, with respect to the matter in future, not to adopt the advice given by the noble Lord who last addressed your Lordships.

LORD STANLEY said, that much as he regretted any alteration in the feelings of the noble Lord towards him, he must still submit to that penalty, conscious as he was that he had only performed his duty in the matter. This debate was none of his seeking. He had not been desirous of raising the question; and in going through what the noble Earl called an "artful tissue of sophistry," he had not been a volunteer, but, on the contrary, he had followed strictly the line taken by the noble Earl. His object had been, not to show that the noble Earl had been guilty of a suppression of documents, but to prove from the fact of documents not having been laid before the Committee at the proper time, that there arose reasonable grounds for parties to believe that some improper interference had systematically taken place with the view of keeping back these documents. With respect to the question of personal and official character, the statements made were statements that these documents had been kept back in the Colonial Office. So far there was no personal question affecting the noble Earl, because it was not known—and it could not be known—whether the suppression in question did or did not take place in consequence of his orders. He (Lord Stanley) had also stated his firm conviction, that as to the original cause of this discussion, the defence of the noble Earl was conclusive. He had done him entire justice—he had stated his (Lord Stanley's) belief that there was no intention of withholding documents—but he had stated that all the facts went to show that there had been a case which justified suspicion on the part of Parliament, and on the part of a public man. Upon one point only he had thought, and still thought, the noble Earl had committed a grave error, that of conveying to the House an erroneous inference from that memorial from the planters which he had held in his hand on that occasion. He (Lord Stanley) had nothing to say as to the relative merits of opinions on the one side or the other. He did not say that these planters were capable of forming a better opinion than the noble Lord; or, on the other hand, that the noble Earl was capable of forming a more accurate judgment upon colonies he had never seen than all the resident colonists put together. It was not the opinion of the colonists as to whether they should or not go on which the noble Earl had not read, but the statement of the actual result of their endeavours as resident proprietors. He (Lord Stanley) had not complained of the noble Earl suppressing opinions, but of the noble Earl giving portions of facts, and suppressing other facts which appeared in the same despatch. What he had complained of was, that the noble Earl had quoted in support of his views the declaration by these planters that they had invested 142,000*l.* in Jamaica, and had argued that, consequently, there was a prospect for a good investment of capital, while, at the same time, the noble Earl had not stated the other fact set forth by the same parties in the same memorial—namely, that the investment of 142,000*l.* had been a total and entire failure. The memorialists stated that they had invested 142,000*l.* after the Act of Emancipation; and the noble Lord thought it fair to suppress, not the expression of any opinion by them, but the fact that that money had been wholly lost; and that the annual outlay was hardly less than the annual income. That was the point he (Lord Stanley) complained of—the noble Lord was aware of all the facts, and their Lordships were not. The noble Earl had led the House to an inference from documents he had, but which had not been presented for two months afterwards, and in the meantime the noble Earl had misled the House.

Earl GREY denied the inference of the noble Lord. The only fact he had quoted was to show that a great change was taking place in the manner of occupation of the land. He had expressed his own opinions as to what the prospects of Jamaica were, and he had said that there had been a year of great and acknowledged distress.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE was understood to say, that the whole of the speech of the noble Lord opposite had been directed to convict his noble Friend the Secretary for the Colonies of inaccuracy, and of having misled the House; and, in striving for that object, the noble Lord had entirely departed from the real subject of discussion. If any one had before entertained a doubt, it would be impossible to do so after the speech of his noble Friend, that any attempt to show that he had been capable of anything like intentional suppression, or of misleading the House, was totally unwarrantable and unfounded, and highly deserving of the reprehension it had met with. He agreed with the noble Lord opposite as to the propriety of examining and sifting the conduct of all public men; but it was because that which was a legitimate object of public debate had been passed, it was because allegations had been made touching the character of his noble Friend in another place, where the discussion had not been conducted in the manner in which it ought to have been, and statements had been made which it had been found necessary to unsay, that his noble Friend had been placed under the obligation of calling the attention of their Lordships to the case. He (the Marquess of Lansdowne) was as willing and desirous as his noble and learned Friend that this discussion should cease; but he hoped it had not taken place without leaving upon the minds of their Lordships, and, he hoped he might add, upon the minds of persons in another place, a conviction of the necessity of avoiding the mixing up imputations of motives with political charges—a course which tended to infuse a degree of acrimony into their discussions, and thus impair much of the usefulness of Parliamentary discussion.

Lord REDESDALE, after briefly stating his view of what the charge against the Colonial Office really was, said, that everything personal towards the noble Earl had been disclaimed in the most explicit and handsome manner. ["No!"] He conceived, that the answer of the noble Earl upon the subject of the memorial was unsatisfactory, because when a document was quoted, the House had a right to know the real tenor of the whole. The noble Lord (Lord Stanley) had simply referred to facts and dates; and the noble Earl opposite had no reason to complain of the manner in which he had used them. The noble Earl, as Minister for the Colonies, must necessarily form his judgment upon colonial affairs from despatches and other documents which came into his hands; and yet the noble Earl had laid down the doctrine that, although he might trust to the facts, he paid no regard to the opinions expressed in those documents. [Earl Grey: No, no!] That seemed an extraordinary principle for a Minister of a department to lay down.

Earl GREY: The next time the noble Lord does me the honour to refer to what has fallen from me, it would be desirable if he would quote something a little like what I did say.

Subject at an end.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, June 28, 1848.

Minutes.] Petitions Presented. By Dr. Bowring, Colonel Thompson, and other Hon. Members, from a great Number of Places, in favour of an Extension of the Elective Franchise.—By Mr. William Brown, from Churchtown, Lancashire, and other Places, for a Better Observance of the Lord's Day.—By Mr. Home Drummond, from the Parish of Killean, Argyleshire, and by other Hon. Members, from several Places, in favour of the Places of Worship Sites (Scotland) Bill.—From John Forster Elmslie, of No. 47, Moorgate Street, London, respecting the Great Eastern and Western Railway Bill (1845).—From R. D. Kane, for Amendment of the Lands' Clauses Consolidation Act (1845).—By Mr. Napier, from Fellows of the King and Queen's College of Physicians in Ireland, for Regulating the Medical Profession in Ireland.—From Guardians of the Poor of the Evesham Union, Worcester, for Alteration of the Law respecting Mendicants.—By Mr. Baines, from Kingston-upon-Hull, against the Merchant Seamen's Fund.—By Mr. Herries, from Glasgow, against a Repeal of the Navigation Laws.—By Viscount Morpeth, from the Commissioners of the Woods and Forests, for the Production of certain Papers in the Case of the Queen *v.* Hallett.—By Mr. Home Drummond, from the Presbytery of Meigle (Scotland), against the Registering Births, &c. (Scotland) Bill (1847); and Marriage (Scotland) Bill (1847).—By Mr. Henry Drummond, from the Members of the Farnham

Mechanics' Institution, for Alteration of the Scientific Societies Bill.—By Mr. Barnard, from Justices of the Peace of the County of Kent, for an Alteration of the Dealers in Spirits Bill.

PRACTICE OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. STAFFORD, adverting to the notice of Motion of the hon. Member for Portarlington, for the issuing of a writ for the election of a Member for the borough of Sligo, which notice, in consequence of the House not meeting yesterday, had become a dropped notice, said, that previous to and at the commencement of the present Session, any hon. Member might have moved for the issuing of a writ as a matter of privilege without notice; but in consequence of a Motion of the hon. Member for Montrose, every Member was now required to give one day's notice of any Motion he intended to bring forward. The hon. Member for Portarlington had complied with this rule; but he did not think that rule, respecting dropped notices, applied to a case of privilege; and, therefore, he was of opinion that the hon. Member for Portarlington might make his Motion now, notwithstanding the House did not meet yesterday.

Mr. SPEAKER said, that all Motions for new writs were formerly matters of privilege, and therefore had precedence of any other business; but the House had waved that privilege by requiring a previous notice of any Motion founded on a special report by an Election Committee. Now, the question raised was, whether a dropped notice respecting such a Motion was required to be renewed? The rule of the House with regard to dropped notices was this—that where they contained any matter that was not debateable, hon. Members might move them at the time the notices of Motion were read; but where the notices contained matter that was debateable, the practice of the House was to put off such notices until the other notices had been disposed of.

THE OFFICERS OF HER MAJESTY'S SHIP SHEARWATER.

Sir G. GREY: I am anxious to make a brief statement to the House in justice to some naval officers, who feel themselves aggrieved by statements affecting them which have appeared in the public papers, and have been made the subject of a question in this House. I refer to the officers of Her Majesty's ship *Shearwater*. The House will recollect a question put to me some time since by the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite, the Member for Armagh, founded on a statement in the newspapers, that the prisoner Mitchel, who was conveyed in that ship to Spike Island, had been invited to breakfast by the officers of the ship. At that time I had no information on the subject beyond what was contained in the public papers, and in a private letter to the same effect. Since that time, however, Admiral Mackay, who is in command at Cork, has called for a detailed report upon the subject from Lieutenant Turnour, the commanding officer of the *Shearwater;* and the explanation is perfectly satisfactory, and completely exonerates the officers from the slightest imputation. It appears that the prisoner was placed on board under the charge of two police officers, and the chart-room was assigned by Lieutenant Turnour for their use during the passage. The steward was directed to furnish the prisoner and police-officers with their meals in the chart-room; and this was done, with the exception of their breakfast, on the only morning on which they were on board, which, in consequence of the chart-room being occupied by the police-officers' bed, was, with the permission of Lieutenant Turnour, provided in the gun-room after the officers of the ship had themselves breakfasted. Lieutenant Turnour and the officers, though feeling aggrieved by the statements which have appeared upon this subject, have very properly abstained, in obedience to general instructions in such cases, from justifying themselves by any statement made through the public press; and, although I should otherwise have thought it unnecessary to refer again to the case, I feel that under these circumstances it is due to the officers of the *Shearwater* that I should give this explanation of the real facts of the case, which completely exonerates them from the slightest blame.

THE DERBY SWEEPS.

Sir R. H. INGLIS some weeks ago had placed in the hands of his right hon. Friend certain advertisements for raising what were called "Derby sweeps," and, believing fully that there was hardly any proceeding that produced more demoralisation among the people, he at the same time gave his right hon. Friend notice that he should ask him, first, whether, according to his own view, and in the opinion of the law officers of the Crown, such practices were illegal; and, secondly, if they were illegal, whether he was prepared to take any measures to prevent or punish such practices in future? He now begged to ask his right hon. Friend whether he was prepared to state what was the law upon the subject, and whether any measures would be taken in order to check the occurrence of such practices in future?

Sir G. GREY said that, in consequence of his attention having been called to this subject by his hon. Friend, he had felt it his duty to ascertain the state of the law as it applied to the question of these Derby sweeps. It appeared, by a decision of the Court of Queen's Bench in 1845, that it was held that a Derby sweep was a lottery, and, therefore, illegal. They were prohibited by the 42nd of George III., c. 19; by the 10th and 11th of George IV., c. 13; and he apprehended that they were included and prohibited by the 6th and 7th of William IV., c. 66. Under these circumstances, a communication had taken place between himself and the Board of Taxes, and he held in his hand a letter from the solicitor of that board in which it was stated that it was the intention of the Excise Commissioners to submit certain of the advertisements to which his hon. Friend had alluded to the Home Office for its determination. He (Sir G. Grey) had not yet received those advertisements; but when he should have received them, he would give the matter every attention.

ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIEF BILL.

The Order of the Day having been read for going into Committee on the Roman Catholic Relief Bill,

Mr. GORING thought that the hon. Member for Youghal (Mr. Anstey), before he called their attention to the obsolete statutes referred to in this Bill, was bound to prove that the Roman Catholic religion was changed, and that the animus which was formerly displayed against Protestants no longer existed. He ought to show that denunciations such as those contained, for example, in the bull *In cœnâ Domini*, had been departed from, and that that bull was not in force, but had been publicly repealed. He was afraid, however, that the hon. Member was wholly unable to show that any such repeal had ever taken place. He found that the present Pope, in his encyclical letter written in 1846, spoke of "the truly illustrious and glorious memory" of his predecessor, Gregory XVI., and cordially approved of his conduct. Now, on referring to the encyclical letter of Gregory XVI., published in 1842, he found him stating that—

> "Nothing of what has been regularly defined ought to be retrenched or changed or increased; but that all should be preserved incorrupt both in meaning and expression."

Again, he spoke of "that worst and never sufficiently to be execrated and detested liberty of the press." Now, the present Pope approved of that letter, and in his encyclical letter repeated all those anathemas that in former times had been sent forth against all heretics and Protestants, particularly those who published copies of the Bible. He would shortly direct the attention of the House to the letter recently published by the noble Lord opposite (the Earl of Arundel and Surrey). Speaking of the bull *In cœnâ Domini*, that noble Lord said, "I do not believe that any bull has been published which repeals the one in question." Now, he contended that before they asked the House to repeal the obsolete statutes complained of, they should first repeal this and the other bulls which were still in existence. But the noble Lord said, the bull was not in force, owing to its having become obsolete. Now, in the 21st Clause of the bull he found the following words:—

> "It being our will that this our present process, and all and everything contained in this letter, shall continue and be in full force until another similar process be drawn up and issued by ourselves, or by the Roman Pontiff for the time being."

It appeared to him that they could only admit the obsolete character of the bull at the expense of the Pope's infallibility; and it was well known that no bull had been published which repealed one now existing. The bull was ordered to be affixed to the doors of the church of St. John of Lateran, in order that no one might be able "to plead any excuse or allege any ignorance on the ground of such process not having reached them, or being unknown to them." But the noble Lord said there were provisions in the bull which could not be complied with in the present state of society; and that "the provisions respecting heretical books and others almost everywhere point to an age far more removed from our times and our habits." The answer to that was in the encyclical letter of the present Pope, where he condemned all those who printed and published editions of the Bible. The noble Lord admitted that the works of Reiffenstuel and Dens were used at Maynooth, but pleaded that books might be good and useful as class and text books which had yet passages of doubtful authority; and he asked if any one would now quote the first edition of Blackstone as a safe guide, seeing that both the law and the state of society were essentially different. But was there any analogy between points of the law and the doctrines on which the everlasting salvation of mankind depended? Then the noble Lord asked if all those works of Horace or the *Satires* of Juvenal were expunged from our schools which might be injurious to the morals of the boys who used them? But the noble Lord forgot that we did not teach morality from the writings of Horace or Juvenal, and that those works were put into the hands of youth merely to teach them language. The noble Lord, in reference to the subject of oaths, said, "If we could not be believed on our oath, or even on our word, it would be absurd to attempt an explanation." Now, he had great respect for the noble Lord, and was confident he had as great a regard for an oath as a Protestant could have; but at the same time he was at a loss to reconcile this with the express decisions of the Church of Rome. One of the canons of Gregory IX. allowed the breach of an oath when it was contrary to the interests of the Church. It was with great regret he touched on these questions; but it was not by him, nor those who thought with him, that they had been raised. By Gregory IX. heretics and schismatics were excommunicated, and all who were bound to them were loosed from their obligations. Clement X. made all heretics amenable to penalties, and even to death. Not one of those anathemas against Protestants had ever been repealed. In the breviary which he held in his hand he found that Pope Pius V., who pretended to dethrone Queen Elizabeth, declared her subjects absolved from their allegiance, and forbade them to obey her commands, had a festival instituted to his honour; and in that breviary he was spoken of as having discharged the office of an inquisitor with extraordinary zeal. The use of the service in which he was so spoken of proved that the spirit of the Church of Rome was still the same in the present day. The Pope asserted the same powers he had ever asserted. He would exercise them if he could; he would exercise them if he obtained the facilities which the hon. and learned Gentleman tried to procure for him. Then there was another day set apart for Gregory VII., the deposer of Henry IV., in which Roman Catholics were to pray that they might follow his example. There was a lesson particularly dedicated to the history of Gregory VII., and the Emperor's name was mentioned in that short biography; it was therein said of Gregory VII. that "he stood like a fearless wrestler against the impious attempts of the Emperor Henry, and excommunicated him." If the present Pope placed a crown on the head of the hon. Member for Youghal, no doubt the hon. Member would think such a proceeding would be more for the promotion of the Roman Catholic religion, than the present state of matters. There was also a day set apart for a festival in honour of St. Alphonso Liguori; and a prayer in which Roman Catholics prayed "to be taught by his admonitions, and strengthened by his example." But Liguori taught in his *Moral Theology* that it was lawful for a man to steal when in extreme necessity, in danger of death, of the gallies, or of prison, and "if his shame of begging be so great that he would prefer death itself to begging." The works of Liguori had received the direct sanction of the Church of Rome. The *Roman Catholic Calendar* said—

> "The Congregation of Rites allowed the cause of his beatification to be brought forward in 1796, and on the 14th of May, 1802, decided that it might be safely proceeded with, the Cardinal Reporter having declared that the theologians who had examined his manuscripts and printed works had found nothing censurable in them."

From a letter in the *Roman Catholic Calendar* it appeared that—

> "On the 18th May, 1803, Pope Pius VII. confirmed the decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, which declared that all the writings of St. Alphonso, whether printed or inedited, had been most rigorously examined according to the discipline of the Apostolic See, and that not one word had been found *censuræ dignum,* and made known that the moral system of St. Alphonso had been more than twenty times rigorously discussed with the rules of the decree of Pope Urban VIII., and the documents of Benedict XIV.; that in all those examinations, undertaken with a view to the canonization of St. Alphonso, and in the definitive judgment of the Sacred Congregation, all agreed *voce concordi, unanimi consensu, una voce, unanimiter.*"

The *Moral Theology* of St. Alphonso Liguori had, therefore, been pronounced by the Roman Catholic church not censurable in the slightest degree—the moral theology of a man who inculcated the doctrine that it was allowable for servants to steal, provided they were not sufficiently paid by their masters. He saw in the *Times* of last Saturday a statement to the effect, that in Sicily the Roman Catholic religion had been declared the religion of the State, to the exclusion of all others. The King was obliged to profess that religion, and, should he change from it, he was to be held as having forfeited his throne. What security was there that if the Roman Catholics got the upper hand in Ireland they would not follow a similar course, with the assistance of the Pope? In the progress of the debate he had heard a great deal of imaginary grievances; but he had not been able to discover one case of practical grievance—any hardship—to which Roman Catholics were subjected by the existing law, or any relief which the repeal of those statutes would give to his Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen. The right hon. the Master of the Mint had spoken of it as a very great grievance under which he laboured, that Roman Catholics were debarred from holding the office of Lord Chancellor of Ireland. That was the only practical grievance the House had heard mentioned in the course of the debate. But there was nothing in the Bill of the hon. and learned Member for Youghal which would touch that exclusion. There must, then, be some secret cause which made hon. Gentlemen anxious to pass this Bill. Knowing that laws, like a piece of masonry, hung one on another, and that if a stone, however apparently useless, were removed from the arch, the whole fabric would be shaken, he opposed the repeal of those laws, as calculated to weaken the efficiency of other laws which remained, and which were the bulwarks of the constitution. There was an argument which, proceeding from one part of the House, he looked on with suspicion. It had been said by the hon. Member for Liverpool (Mr. Cardwell), that the Bill ought to be carried, in order to put an end to religious discussion in that House. The very Wednesday after the hon. Gentleman's speech to that effect, he saw on the Paper a notice of another Bill, namely, the Roman Catholic Charitable Trusts Bill. If any weight were to be attached to such an argument, it could only be regarded as grossly insulting to the Roman Catholics. Were the House to suppose that the Roman Catholics would rest satisfied with this Bill—that the order of which the hon. and learned Member was so distinguished an ornament—that the Jesuits—that the high spirit of the noble Lord the Member for Arundel (the Earl of Arundel and Surrey) would rest satisfied with this Bill? The noble Lord had spoken of the Roman Catholic Church as aggressive. The noble Lord would bring forward some other measure next Session for the advancement of the Roman Catholic religion. He should not entertain the respect for the noble Lord which he did if he did not believe that the noble Lord would do so. Were he in the noble Lord's position, he should certainly use every effort to obtain the repeal of that law by which Her Most Gracious Majesty would be deposed were she to change her religion. This measure would not satisfy the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. From the extracts he had read, it appeared manifest that they would be satisfied with nothing short of supremacy. He objected to the time at which this measure had been proposed. The conduct of the Roman Catholics in Ireland was not such as entitled them to any boon. The House had the high authority of the Prime Minister, in speaking of the late trial of Mitchel, for believing that Roman Catholics had been excluded from the jury list, not on account of their religion, but because their feelings were supposed to be in accordance with those of the prisoner. What conclusion must be drawn from such a statement? What other inference could be drawn, than that all Roman Catholics were disaffected to Her Majesty's Government in Ireland? The *Tablet* said, in reply to a remark made by Mr. Drummond—

> "We believe the difference between the 'dead Papists of books,' and the 'real live Roman Catholics' to be very slight; and that the difference, if any there be, is in favour of the 'Papists of books.'"

The same journal, referring to what had fallen from another hon. Member, said, "Mr. Newdegate's loyalty is somewhat questionable."

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman is taking a course not in accordance with the rules of the House.

Mr. GORING regretted his inadvertent departure from the rules. The Roman Catholics had no right to complain of obsolete statutes remaining on the Statute-book when there was a law also remaining on the Statute-book by which divines were made liable to the penalties of a *præmunire*, to fine and imprisonment, if they did not elect as bishops persons whom they thought unfit to fill that sacred office. This Bill would be regarded as an insult by the loyal Orangemen of Ireland. The time which would test the loyal Protestants of Ireland was approaching, when that disorder would break forth which had been cherished by the noble Lord's policy, characterised as it was by a truckling spirit towards demagogues, and a threatening spirit towards landlords. For the reasons he had stated, and especially as there was not a single Member of Her Majesty's Government present, he thought he would not be betraying a very factious spirit if he moved to postpone going into Committee on the Bill till that day fortnight.

SIR. H. WILLOUGHBY did not see the hon. and learned Attorney General in his place, though the hon. and learned Gentleman had an Amendment to propose. If the House went into Committee, what would be the state of the question? The hon. and learned Gentleman's Amendment would fall to be considered; but he was anxious to point out to the hon. and learned Gentleman that the Amendment would not attain its object, as there were other bulls not included under its terms. It was a question with him whether the discussion should be persisted in; and he thought the absence of the Attorney General afforded a sufficient reason for postponement. How was legislation to be effected by the provisions of the present Bill? There were no fewer than eight statutes lumped up in a mass, which it was proposed to repeal, "so far as affected Roman Catholics." If there were any disabilities, real and tangible, which affected Roman Catholics, he would be ready to assist in removing such disabilities. But he would defy the noble Lord the Member for Arundel to point out any penalties on Roman Catholics imposed in any of the Acts enumerated which had not been repealed by some subsequent statute. The hon. and learned Member for Youghal had entered the field, indeed, rather late, because, by the 7th and 8th of Victoria, cap. 102, and by the 9th and 10th of Victoria, c. 59, all disabilities and punishments established in the first six Acts were altogether removed. The first clause did not deal fairly and candidly with the House, because it assumed that pains and penalties existed which in reality had ceased. Then the statute of William III., which related to the oaths taken by barristers, had been altogether repealed by an Act of George III. If the hon. and learned Member for Youghal proved that the penalties of the 1st of Elizabeth, c. 1, existed, he (Sir H. Willoughby) would not continue his opposition. He trusted the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department, who was the only representative of Government present, would explain to the House how they could go on with the discussion in the Committee without the presence of the Attorney General.

SIR G. GREY said, it would be very inconvenient, if not contrary to the rules of the House, to go into the discussion of the Amendment at that moment, before the House was in Committee.

MR. FORBES objected to going into Committee, and he hoped his hon. Friend (Mr. Goring) would press his Motion to a division. Differing as he did from the object of this Bill, he should feel it to be his duty to give it his most decided opposition. It was all very well to talk of the grievances to which Roman Catholics were subjected by the provisions of the Act complained of; but it was well known that under that Act no proceedings had been taken against any Roman Catholic ecclesiastic whatever. Besides, he was not prepared by a side wind to repeal that provision of the Act of 1829 which had been introduced as a safeguard to the Protestanism of this country.

MR. SERJEANT TALFOURD regretted the course which had been taken by the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Goring). All the topics which had been introduced as obstacles to proceeding with this Bill on the present occasion, had been very fully discussed on a previous day in the admirable speech of the hon. and learned Member for Midhurst (Mr. Walpole). The House having affirmed the principle of the Bill on the second reading, a long discussion having taken place on the question of going into Committee, and the House having, when in Committee, arrived at a decision in which he most heartily concurred, that the Bill should be divided into two parts, he did confess that it appeared to him to be a factious course now to raise another discussion upon the principle of the Bill upon going into Committee on the present occasion. He was prepared to join the hon. Gentleman opposite in voting against that part of the Bill which went to disturb the great settlement of Catholic emancipation, without, he believed, doing any real good to our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, whilst it would create the greatest irritation among the Protestants of the kingdom, who were justly excited by the pretensions to domination put forward by the Roman Catholics. He sympathised with them on that point; but he did not think it fitting to obstruct the progress of the Bill by discussing matters which had been so well discussed before.

Mr. NEWDEGATE said, the important fact must not be lost sight of, that the first question they would have to consider on going into Committee was an Amendment to be proposed by the Attorney General, the effect of which would be rather to conceal than to amend the proposition of the hon. Member for Youghal (Mr. C. Anstey), whose purpose was to admit in this country the authority of the Pope, to be enforced with the sanction of English law and of the English Government. Although the principle of the Bill had been fully discussed, yet he did not think that the objection formerly raised by the hon. Member for Midhurst (Mr. Walpole), to the repeal of the 13th of Elizabeth, was fairly met by Her Majesty's Ministers; for he had certainly hoped that they would have insisted that that particular statute should be exempted from the list of Acts proposed to be repealed. He wished, therefore, to impress upon the House, that the Amendment which the Attorney General was to move on going into Committee, would not meet the emergency of the case, and that it was necessary to take a review of the whole question now, before they went into Committee, when it would not be compatible with the practice to do so. Let him remind the House of the conditions upon which the Pope, when he ascended the chair of St. Peter, recommended allegiance to those sovereigns who acknowledged his authority. In his encyclical letter he said—

> "Have a care to impress upon their minds the obedience and subjection which are due from a Christian people to princes and powers, teaching according to the apostolic precept that there is no power but from God, and that those who resist the power, resist the ordinance of God, and purchase to themselves damnation. And, therefore, that this precept of obeying the lawful authorities cannot be violated by any one without sin, unless indeed anything be commanded which is opposed to the laws of God and of the Church."

Of which the Pope is the sole framer and expounder. Now, these were the conditions upon which his Holiness would vouchsafe to Her Majesty his protection, if his authority were admitted in this country, and communications were instituted between the Court of England and the Court of Rome. And what did he say would be Her Majesty's position should his authority be admitted? He said in the same encyclical letter—

> "We trust that the princes, our dearest sons in Christ, remembering, in their piety and religion, that the kingly authority was given to them not only for the government of the world, but more especially for the protection of the Church (St. Leo Epist., 156 al. 125 ad Leonem Augustum), and that we, whilst we maintain the cause of the Church, maintain that also of their kingdom and of their safety, that so they may hold their provinces in undisturbed possession (*Idem*, Epist. 43 al. 34 ad Theodosium Augustum), will aid our common wishes and endeavours with their power and authority, and defend the liberty and safety of the Church, that the right hand of Christ may defend their kingdom (*Idem. Ibid.*)."

The House would observe that the Pope here assumed to himself to be the representative of Christ on earth; and the meaning of the reservation in the above passage was, that he would maintain the authority of no king or potentate who did not style himself the spiritual child of him (the Bishop of Rome); who would not undertake to advance the interests of the Romish Church, or would not submit to the decrees which the Pope enunciated as the law. He asked the House, then, to pause ere they constituted in this country, under the authority of their own legal officers, the admission of the power of this potentate, who would consent to nothing less than the acknowledgment of his own supremacy. They could not have two concurrent supremacies in the same kingdom. They could not have two suns in the same firmament. And, therefore, the present measure, if agreed to, would entail upon the country a perpetual collision between the authority of two powers, each claiming supremacy, the Crown of England on the one hand, the Pope of Rome on the other. If difficulties were continually rising whilst yet the supremacy of the Crown was intact, and supported by the undoubted loyalty of the great body of the people—if difficulties arose even now, from the aggressive action of the Church of Rome what must the difficulties be when this collision for supremacy should take place? It was admitted that the present was an aggressive measure, yet hon. Members qurrelled with him and his friends because they had again and again pleaded the general issue. Why, the general issue was, that he and those who acted with him, and who were on the defensive, complained of those perpetual aggressions; and they wished to make the country understand that under the title of "Relief Bill" was concealed an attempt at aggression on the Protestant Church, and to draw still closer round our Roman Catholic brethren in this kingdom and in Ireland the bonds of the iron tyranny of the

Roman See. The Roman Catholic Members of this House complained of their hands being tied. "Here are the marks of the iron on our wrists," said the Master of the Mint (Mr. Sheil); but he could see no scar—it had been obliterated, and the hands which were now unbound were raised against the Protestant institutions of the country. He appealed to hon. Members from Ireland whether this was not the fact; for had not Parliament been obliged to pass an Act to prevent their speaking treason? They talked of grievances, but what were they? Daily their religion was extending itself—new Roman Catholic churches were rising in all directions around us—and the Roman Catholics themselves carried on a wide system of combination, and had perfect liberty of action throughout the British empire. Yet they were constantly complaining and threatening our Protestant institutions with the hand which Protestant legislation had set free. Let the House remember that even when this country was strictly Roman Catholic, our kings were one after the other forced to defend themselves against the aggressions of the Roman Catholic Church—in fact, there had been but one series of aggressions from the Conquest to the present day. He hoped, therefore, that the House and the country were equally prepared to resist this further attempt at aggression in the shape of a Relief Bill. In the absence of the Attorney General, he begged to ask the right hon. Gentleman (Sir G. Grey) whether the Amendment of the Attorney General, which it was proposed to introduce in Committee, would guard against the introduction of Papal bulls with regard to the immediate appointment to benefices, and giving jurisdiction to the Pope in that country in ecclesiastical affairs? Because so far as he had ascertained, in consulting those who were best acquainted with the subject, such acts as those which might be considered ministerial on the part of the Pope, as being at the head of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, would be maintained under the Amendments of the Attorney General. He asked whether the Government was prepared to constitute itself the agents of a foreign supremacy? They proposed that only certain bulls should be introduced into this country; but were they te constitute themselves the judges? If so, they would sanction their being the agents and servants of a hostile Power.

Colonel CONOLLY had resisted the measure in its former stages, and the more he had considered it the more was he convinced of its dangerous tendency. A number of obsolete Acts of Parliament had been raked up and exaggerated into a grievance, to annihilate the security which was offered by the Roman Catholic body themselves at the time the Emancipation Act was passed.

The House divided on the question that the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question:—Ayes 102; Noes 76: Majority 26.

List of the Ayes.

Adair, R. A. S.
Adderley, C. B.
Armstrong, Sir A.
Barnard, E. G.
Barrington, Visct.
Bellew, R. M.
Bernal, R.
Blackall, S. W.
Bourke, R. S.
Bowles, Adm.
Brotherton, J.
Brown, W.
Callaghan, D.
Caulfeild, J. M.
Clements, hon. C. S.
Cobden, R.
Courtenay, Lord
Damer, hon. Col.
Dawson, hon. T. V.
Drumlanrig, Visct.
Drummond, H.
Duncan, G.
Dunne, F. P.
East, Sir J. B.
Elliot, hon. J. E.
Estcourt, J. B. B.
Evans, W.
Fagan, W.
Fitzroy, hon. H.
Foley, J. H. H.
Fordyce, A. D.
Forster, M.
Fortescue, C.
Gladstone, rt. hn. W. E.
Grace, O. D. J.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Haggitt, F. R.
Hall, Sir B.
Hastie, A.
Hawes, B.
Hayter, W. G.
Headlam, T. E.
Heneage, G. H. W.
Henry, A.
Hervey, Lord A.
Heywood, J.
Hobhouse, rt. hon. Sir J.
Hobhouse, T. B.
Johnstone, Sir J.
Keogh, W.
Kershaw, J.
King, hon. P. J. L.
Lewis, G. C.
M'Cullagh, W. T.
Maher, N. V.
Maitland, T.
Marshall, W.
Melgund, Visct.
Milner, W. M. E.
Moffatt, G.
Molesworth, Sir W.
Monsell, W.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Mowatt, F.
Mulgrave, Earl of
Napier, J.
O'Brien, J.
Ogle, S. C. H.
Pakington, Sir J.
Patten, J. W.
Pusey, P.
Raphael, A.
Repton, G. W. J.
Roche, E. B.
Sadlier, J.
Scrope, G. P.
Scully, F.
Seymer, H. K.
Sheridan, R. B.
Simeon, J.
Slaney, R. A.
Smith, rt. hon. R. V.
Smith, J. B.
Somerville, rt. hon. Sir W.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Strickland, Sir G.
Stuart, Lord D.
Sullivan, M.
Talfourd, Serj.
Tancred, H. W.
Tenison, E. K.
Thicknesse, R. A.
Thompson, Col.
Thornely, T.
Townshend, Capt.
Tufnell, H.
Vane, Lord H.
Watkins, Col.
Wawn, J. T.
Williams, J.

TELLERS.

Anstey, T. C.
Arundel and Surrey, Earl of

List of the Noes.

Arkwright, G.
Bagge, W.
Baldock, E. H.
Beckett, W.

Bentinck, Lord H.
Beresford, W.
Boldero, H. G.
Bremridge, R.
Broadley, H.
Bruce, C. L. C.
Buck, L. W.
Chichester, Lord J.L.
Christopher, R. A.
Christy, S.
Cobbold, J. C.
Cole, hon. H. A.
Compton, H. C.
Conolly, Col.
Cubitt, W.
Davies, D. A. S.
Duckworth, Sir J. T. B.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Dundas, G.
Egerton, W. T.
Farnham, E. B.
Farrer, J.
Fellowes, E.
Forbes, W.
Forester, hon. G. C. W.
Fox, S. W. L.
Frewen, C. H.
Fuller, A. E.
Galway, Visct.
Goddard, A. L.
Gooch, E. S.
Gore, W. R. O.
Gwyn, H.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Hayes, Sir E.
Henley, J. W.
Hildyard, R. C.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hood, Sir A.
Hotham, Lord
Hudson, G.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Jones, Capt.
Lockhart, W.
Mackenzie, W. F.
Macnaghten, Sir E.
Mandeville, Visct.
Manners, Lord C. S.
Miles, P. W. S.
Mullings, J. R.
Newdegate, C. N.
Palmer, R.
Plowden, W. H. C.
Prime, R.
Pugh, D.
Sandars, G.
Scott, hon. F.
Seymour, Sir H.
Shirley, E. J.
Sibthorp, Col.
Spooner, R.
Stafford, A.
Stuart, H.
Thornhill, G.
Trollope, Sir J.
Vivian, J. E.
Vyse, R. H. R. H.
Waddington, H. S.
Welby, G. E.
Wellesley, Lord C.

TELLERS.
Goring, C.
Willoughby, Sir H.

House went into Committee.

On the question that the following words be inserted in the 1st (repealing) Clause :—

> " Also so much of an Act passed in the 13th of Elizabeth, entitled ' An Act against the bringing in and putting in Execution of Bulls, Writings, or Instruments, and other Superstitious Things of the See of Rome,' as does not relate to such bulls, writings, and other things as are mentioned in the preamble of the said Act."

After a short debate, it was moved that the Chairman do now report progress.

The Committee divided on reporting progress: — Ayes 106; Noes 110: Majority 4.

The Committee again divided on the question that the words be inserted :—Ayes 113 ; Noes 113.

List of the Ayes.

Acland, Sir T. D.
Adair, H. E.
Adair, R. A. S.
Armstrong, Sir A.
Baines, M. T.
Baring, rt. hon. Sir F. T.
Barnard, E. G.
Blake, M. J.
Bowring, Dr.
Brotherton, J.
Brown, W.
Bunbury, E. H.
Butler, P. S.
Buxton, Sir E. N.
Callaghan, D.
Campbell, hon. W. F.
Clay, Sir W.
Cavendish, hon. G. H.
Clements, hon. C. S.
Cobden, R.
Coke, hon. E. K.
Courtenay, Lord
Dawson, hon. T. V.
Drummond, H.
Duff, G. S.
Duncan, G.
Dunne, F. P.
East, Sir J. B.
Elliot, hon. J. E.
Estcourt, J. B. B.
Euston, Earl of
Evans, W.
Fagan, W.
Fergus, J.
Fordyce, A. D.
Forster, M.
Fox, W. J.
Gladstone, rt. hon. W.E.
Grace, O. D. J.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Greene, J.
Greene, T.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Grosvenor, Lord R.
Hallyburton, Lord J. F.
Hastie, A.
Hayter, W. G.
Headlam, T. E.
Heneage, G. H. W.
Hervey, Lord A.
Heywood, J.
Hobhouse, T. B.
Hume, J.
Humphery, Ald.
Johnstone, Sir J.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Kershaw, J.
Littleton, hon. E. R.
Locke, J.
Lushington, C.
Maher, N. V.
Maitland, T.
Marshall, J. G.
Matheson, Col.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Milner, W. M. E.
Moffatt, G.
Monsell, W.
Moore, G. H.
Morpeth, Visct.
Mowatt, F.
O'Brien, J.
O'Brien, T.
O'Connell, M. J.
Osborne, R.
Owen, Sir J.
Patten, J. W.
Pechell, Capt.
Peel, Col.
Peto, S. M.
Pigott, F.
Pilkington, J.
Pusey, P.
Raphael, A.
Rich, H.
Robartes, T. J. A.
Scrope, G. P.
Scully, F.
Seymer, H. K.
Simeon, J.
Spearman, H. J.
Stuart, Lord J.
Sullivan, M.
Tenison, E. K.
Tennent, R. J.
Thicknesse, R. A.
Thompson, Col.
Thornely, T.
Trelawny, J. S.
Turner, E.
Urquhart, D.
Vane, Lord H.
Villiers, Visct.
Villiers, hon. F. W. C.
Wall, C. B.
Walpole, S. H.
Ward, H. G.
Watkins, Col.
Wawn, J. T.
Wilson, M.
Wood, rt. hon. Sir C.
Wood, W. P.
Wyvill, M.

TELLERS.
Anstey, T. C.
Arundel and Surrey
Earl of

List of the Noes.

Adderley, C. B.
Arkwright, G.
Bagot, hon. W.
Baldock, E. H.
Barrington, Visct.
Bateson, T.
Bennet, P.
Bentinck, Lord H.
Beresford, W.
Boldero, H. G.
Boyd, J.
Bremridge, R.
Broadley, H.
Brooke, Lord
Bruce, C. L. C.
Buck, L. W.
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Bunbury, W. M.
Carew, W. H. P.
Christy, S.
Cole, hon. H. A.
Coles, H. B.
Compton, H. C.
Conolly, Col.
Copeland, Ald.
Cubitt, W.
Davies, D. A. S.
Dod, J. W.
Dodd, G.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Duncuft, J.
Edwards, H.
Egerton, Sir P.
Egerton, W. T.
Farnham, E. B.
Farrer, J.
Fellowes, E.
Filmer, Sir E.
Forbes, W.
Fox, S. W. L.
Frewen, C. H.
Fuller, A. E.
Galway, Visct.
Gooch, E. S.
Gore, W. O.

Goring, C.
Granby, Marq. of
Grogan, E.
Gwyn, H.
Hall, Col.
Hamilton, G. A.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Harris, hon. Capt.
Henley, J. W.
Herries, rt. hon. J. C.
Hildyard, R. C.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hodgson, W. N.
Hood, Sir A.
Hotham, Lord
Houldsworth, T.
Hudson, G.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Jocelyn, Visct.
Jones, Capt.
Knox, Col.
Lennox, Lord H. G.
Lindsay, hon. Col.
Lockhart, W.
Lowther, hon. Col.
Lowther, H.
Mackenzie, W. F.
Mandeville, Visct.
Manners, Lord C. S.
Manners, Lord G.
Maxwell, hon. J. P.
Morgan, O.
Mullings, J. R.
Napier, J.
Neeld, J.
Neeld, J.
Noel, hon. G. J.
Ossulston, Lord
Pennant, hon. Col.
Plowden, W. H. C.
Powell, Col.
Renton, J. C.
Repton, G. W. J.
Rufford, F.
Rushout, Capt.
Shirley, E. J.
Sibthorp, Col.
Sidney, Ald.
Smyth, J. G.
Spooner, R.
Stafford, A.
Sturt, H. G.
Talfourd, Serj.
Taylor, T. E.
Trevor, hon. G. R.
Trollope, Sir J.
Verner, Sir W.
Vyse, R. H. R. H.
Waddington, D.
Waddington, H. S.
Walsh, Sir J. B.
Welby, G. E.
Wellesley, Lord C.
Willoughby, Sir H.
Wodehouse, E.
Worcester, Marq. of
Wynn, Sir W. W.

TELLERS.
Newdegate, C. N.
Stuart, J.

The Chairman gave his casting vote for inserting the words.

On the question that the Chairman do now report progress, the Committee divided:—Ayes 110; Noes 111: Majority 1.

[The other List being similar, we need not repeat it.]

Sir R. H. INGLIS said, he had been to consult the highest authority as to the forms and usages of that House. From what he had heard, he (Sir R. Inglis) believed that, although precedents might be found for the Speaker giving a casting vote, there was (as we understood) no precedent for such a course being taken by the Chairman of a Committee. He thought that the discussion on this Bill ought not to be continued, after the proceedings which had taken place.

The CHAIRMAN said, the House must allow him to state that, during the number of years he had had the honour of occupying the chair, he did not remember any occurrence of this kind; and, without referring to those authorities from which he might derive information on the subject, he was totally unprepared to say whether a similar case had ever before occurred.

House resumed. Committee to sit again.
House adjourned at Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, June 29, 1848.

Minutes.] *Took the Oaths.*—The Marquess of Abercorn.
Public Bills.—1^a Bankrupt Law Consolidation.
2^a Commons Inclosure; Law of Entail (Scotland).
Petitions Presented. From Buckland, and several other Places, against the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on the Sabbath.—From several Charitable Institutions of Bath, for the Exemption of Hospitals and other Charities from the Payment of Legacy Duty on Bequests made to them.—From Mullinacuffe, against the present System of National Education in Ireland.—From Alpington, and other Places, in favour of the Health of Towns Bill.—From Dysart and Nesling, against the Marriage (Scotland) Bill, and the Registering Births, &c. (Scotland) Bill.—From Hatherleigh, for the Enactment of Sanitary Measures.

ECCLESIASTICAL UNION AND DIVISION OF PARISHES (IRELAND) BILL.

On the Order of the Day being read for receiving the Report of the Amendments,

Lord STANLEY said, though he concurred in agreeing with the noble Lord opposite, that the object of this Bill was a most beneficial one, he could not refrain calling the attention of their Lordships to the fact that it omitted to do what all similar measures on the subject had done—namely, to provide that the consent of the patron of the benefice should be obtained to the division of a union or to the consolidation of parishes. He thought they ought not to deviate in so important a principle from their former legislation on this subject. It was quite true that the patron would be entitled by this Bill to state his objections to the Lord Lieutenant and to the Privy Council of Ireland, who were to take them into consideration, but then the decision was to rest with them. He could not understand also why it should be proposed to apply the measure to private patrons only, and that the Crown should be exempted. He did not, however, wish to oppose the measure at its present stage, but merely threw out these remarks for the consideration of the noble Earl opposite, previous to the third reading.

Earl FORTESCUE supported the Bill, which, he said, had been framed with the consent of the most rev. Prelate the Primate of Ireland.

After a few words from Lord Monteagle,

The Earl of RODEN condemned the measure, and thanked the noble Earl for calling the attention of their Lordships to it.—Amendments reported.

LAW OF ENTAIL (SCOTLAND) BILL.

The LORD CHANCELLOR moved the Second Reading of this Bill, the object of which was to assimilate the law of Scotland with respect to entails to that of England. He did not apprehend that any of their Lordships would be of opinion that the present defective state of the law of entail in Scotland was such as ought to be continued. The present state of the law did not affect merely private individuals, but the country generally. There could be no doubt that the agricultural interests, and those of all who were concerned in the landed property of the country, were affected by a law which prevented the sale of landed property in many cases. Long experience had proved that the law of entail in this country was satisfactory, and that they would have a safe precedent to guide them in respect to Scotland. The three first clauses of this Bill were framed with extreme caution, in order to assimilate the law of Scotland with that of England. The Bill provided that parties wishing to disentail their estates should first have the consent of the parties next entitled; whatever interest there might be beyond the three was not to be considered, when opposed to the vast advantages which must accrue from the assimilation of the law. The measure was one which would confer a great boon on Scotland.

The DUKE of BUCCLEUCH said, it was not his intention to offer any opposition to the second reading of this Bill; but he must state his opinion, that there never had been brought under their Lordships' consideration any measure of so sweeping a character as this; affecting the possession and inheritance of property in Scotland. It was no small alteration in the law which was proposed; at the same time he was not prepared to say that some alteration was not necessary in the existing law of entail in Scotland. He knew there was a prejudice against this law as it was in force in Scotland; but he believed its general practical operation had been most beneficial to the country, and that it had often protected property which under different circumstances would have been split up in small portions. He believed that this Bill in some instances went beyond the law of England. He would not trouble their Lordships with any further observations, but would consent to the second reading; and he moved that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee.

After a few words from Lord CAMPBELL in support of the Bill,

The DUKE of ARGYLL said, that the clamour and agitation which had been raised against the present law in Scotland, had been raised by those who knew little or nothing of its working, and in places where there was a tendency to democratic opinions. This Bill was a great and important change in the present system, which should not be lightly consented to; and, like his noble Friend (the Duke of Buccleuch) he should consent to the second reading of the Bill, and support the Motion for referring it to a Select Committee.

The DUKE of MONTROSE expressed his satisfaction that the noble Lord who moved the second reading of this Bill had consented to its being referred to a Select Committee. He had no doubt that such a course met with the approbation of nearly every noble Lord present.

The EARL of MINTO said, that he believed the object of the Bill was to assimilate the Scotch law of entail to the law of England, and therefore he entirely approved of it. A feeling of discontent had arisen, in consequence of the present law, which was by no means confined to democratic towns, and which this Bill was in every way calculated to remove.

Bill read 2^a.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, June 29, 1848.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—1° Naval Medical Supplemental Fund Society.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Hume, Mr. Feargus O'Connor, and other Hon. Members, from an Immense Number of Places, in favour of an Extension of the Elective Franchise.—By Mr. J. L. Ricardo, from Longton (Stafford), and several other Places, for a Better Observance of the Lord's Day.—By Sir George Clerk, from the Commissioners of Supply of the County of Edinburgh, against the Marriage (Scotland) Bill (1847).—By Mr. Law Hodges, from the Board of Guardians of the Lewisham Union, for Promoting Colonisation.—By Mr. Cardwell, from the Brazilian Association of Liverpool, against any Alteration of the Sugar Duty.—By Mr. Stanton, from Painswick, Gloucester, against the Diplomatic Relations, Court of Rome, Bill.—From Protestant Inhabitants of Mullinacuffe, Wicklow, for Encouragement to Schools in Connexion with the Church Education Society (Ireland).—By Mr. Arkwright, from Bakewell, Derby, for an Alteration of the Highways Bill.—By Mr. C. Buller, from the Board of Guardians of the Kingsclere Union, for an Alteration of the Law respecting Mendicants.—By Lord Robert Grosvenor, from several Railway Companies, for Alteration of the Parochial Debt and Audit Bill.—By Viscount Ingestre, from the Guardians of the Lichfield Union, for an Alteration of the Poor Law.

THE COLONIAL OFFICE.

LORD G. BENTINCK: Sir, I will take this opportunity of putting a question to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, to the noble Lord at the head of the Government, and to the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies, to all of whom I have given notice that it was my intention to put that question, unless some one of those three Gentlemen was prepared to get up and give an explanation to the House. I have to ask those Gentlemen to answer the challenge I threw out to them respectively; and I now call upon the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, in particular, to reconcile the fact of the existence of a number of despatches from Jamaica, and their concealment from this House, with the statement made by the right hon. Gentleman on the 8th of February? I will take leave to call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman and the House to a question that was asked, and to the answer that was given to it on the 8th of February last, and I will quote from *Hansard*. On that day Mr. Goulburn put the following question:—

> "He wished to know why Jamaica had been omitted in the statement of the affairs of the several West Indian colonies laid before the House; and also if there would be any objection on the part of the Government to lay the last intelligence from Jamaica on the table?"

The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade made answer—

> "That, as the right hon. Gentleman had had the kindness to give him notice of his intention to ask the question, he had applied to the Colonial Office on the subject, and was enabled to state, that the reason no blue book had been laid on the table respecting Jamaica was, that it had not been received."

To that part of the answer there was no objection; but the following I call upon him to explain:—

> "Owing to the ample information which had been forwarded by Lord Elgin, Earl Grey [he believed this should be Sir Charles Grey, not Earl Grey] had stated he could add nothing to the sources of intelligence already opened by the noble Lord. With respect to the latter part of the right hon. Gentleman's question, he had to say, that no despatch had been received giving any general account of the state of Jamaica; but, as soon as such a document should be received, it was the intention of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to communicate it without delay to the House."

Now, at the time that statement was made, there were in the possession of the Colonial Office no less than five despatches, which, if not of great importance in themselves, were of the greatest importance on account of the memorials and statements on the subject of the general condition of Jamaica which they covered and transmitted to Earl Grey. The first of these despatches I will only slightly allude to—

Mr. SPEAKER said, the noble Lord must confine himself to the question he had to put, and to such statements only as were necessary to make the question intelligible.

Lord J. RUSSELL: Perhaps I may be permitted here to observe, that the statement which the noble Lord has made as that delivered by my right hon. Friend, is not a correct statement of what my right hon. Friend said.

Lord G. BENTINCK: The right hon. Gentleman will have an opportunity of explaining to the House what he did say. My question goes to this—I ask the right hon. Gentleman how he reconciles the answer I have read with the fact that the Colonial Office was then in possession of despatches which had subsequently come before this House? The first of these despatches is dated the 25th of March, 1847, and the second the 21st of September, 1847, and which states—

> "That the low price of sugar in the London market threatens many of the planters with ruin, and that there are indications of a movement in favour of a return to the principle of protection."

The third and most important despatch is dated the 6th of November, 1847, and was received in December, transmitting a copy of the Governor's own speech, and containing the following passage:—

> "A merely formal address, consisting only of empty civilities, of commonplace recommendations, would have been received with disgust and impatience, and would have been a vacuum into which all the better feeling of the moment would have outpoured itself in reply. Deeming it right, therefore, to speak to the purpose, the only safe course was to speak plainly, and with the most perfect truth and entire sincerity, for the accomplishment of which I require to be allowed a certain degree of fulness, and perhaps prolixity. There is not a word of what I said which was not meant to express my real sentiment."

Then, in the fourth place, there was another despatch, received 28th of December, 1847, in which Sir C. Grey encloses a memorial from the planters, merchants, labourers, and other inhabitants of Hanover, in Jamaica, stating that—

> "Your memorialists are reduced to the greatest distress, and pray your Majesty's interference in their behalf, to prevent the utter annihilation of their property, and their being driven forth from the colony they inhabit, penniless, and without a home."

And going on to say—

> "Your memorialists most respectfully submit, that should this ruinous state of affairs continue a few months longer, the whole of these properties (once giving a large income) must be thrown up, and your memorialists reduced to beggary and ruin. * * * Your memorialists, with all deference, submit, that a reduction of duty on

> British colonial sugar, so as to afford them a protection against the slavegrower, would neither tend to limit the consumption or diminish the revenue, while it would prevent the abandonment of the British sugar colonies."

I come now to the last despatch, which is a most important one, with reference to the answer given by the right hon. Gentleman opposite on the 8th of February—the despatch, I mean, from Governor Grey, which enclosed that remarkable document, that remarkable memorial, to which public attention has been so painfully drawn of late, and which on the day previous to the answer of the right hon. Gentleman had been quoted in another place; and I have to ask the right hon. Gentleman how he accounts for his coming down to this House and stating on the 8th of February that no despatch had been received giving any general account of the state of Jamaica, but that as soon as such a document should be received it was the intention of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to communicate it without delay to the House? I therefore ask the right hon Gentleman how he justifies his statement made to the House on the authority of the Colonial Office—which he distinctly intimated he had had an opportunity of consulting, having had due notice of the question, that no such despatch had been received, and how he reconciles the promise that such despatch should be communicated without delay to the House, with the fact that those despatches were never communicated to the House till a month after, that is to say, till the 8th of March, when the subject had become almost forgotten, and when they were not laid on the table of the House itself, but were sent to a Committee, there to be buried in the midst of 488 pages of evidence and documents contained in the report of that Committee, which was published on the 14th of March?

Mr. LABOUCHERE: The noble Lord has thought fit to inquire what were my reasons for not having taken part in the discussion which occurred on Monday night? I did not understand him to make any attack upon me on that occasion. With respect to my statement of the 8th of February, in making that communication I was only acting as the organ of the Colonial Office when I responded to the question of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Goulburn); and when the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies, who is necessarily cognisant of the circumstances of the case, was present in the House to make the explanations which were required the other day, I did not feel that it was incumbent upon me to take part in the discussion. As the noble Lord, however, has given me notice of his intention to put the question he has now put, I have made inquiry as to what has been done by the Colonial Office in the matter; and I am prepared to say that I am perfectly satisfied the engagement which I made in the name of that department, and to which the noble Lord has adverted, has been literally and exactly executed—has been executed to the letter as well as in the spirit. What was that engagement? The question and answer have been read from *Hansard;* and the noble Lord has founded his statement on that version of what passed on the 8th of February, when the right hon. Member for the University of Cambridge made his inquiry. But the question and answer are more fully reported in the *Times* newspaper of the following day. I, therefore, take the liberty of reading the report of that question and answer as given in the *Times* newspaper of the 9th of February. The extract is rather long, but the words are remarkable:—

> "Mr. Goulburn remarked, that reports had just been presented to the House from all the colonies except Jamaica; he wished to know the reason for this omission, and whether a report was intended to be presented from that colony; and also whether there would be any objection to lay on the table the latest intelligence from Jamaica?—Mr. Labouchere had made inquiry at the Colonial Office, and found that the reason why no blue book from Jamaica had been laid on the table was that no such document had been received thence. Owing, he believed, to Lord Elgin having sent very ample information while he was Governor, and Sir C. Grey having only very recently arrived there, it was probable that there was no further information to be supplied at present. With regard to the question, whether any further despatches from Jamaica would be laid on the table, he had to state, that though there was no despatch from Jamaica with any general account of the island, there were some despatches from that and some other West Indian islands which it was the intention of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to lay on the table without delay."

With respect to the blue book, I pass it over, because I have no controversy with the noble Lord. The noble Lord is aware that there is no blue book from Jamaica, that it has not arrived, and, *à fortiori*, therefore, it was not possible to produce it to the House in February. But I wish briefly to touch upon two points in which the noble Lord says my statement then is at variance with the conduct of the Colonial Office. He says, first, that I stated there were no despatches from Jamaica with any general account of the island. The noble Lord thinks there are despatches which do contain a general account; but the Colonial Office, in instructing me, showed that there was no despatch which could be supposed to give a general account of the island. There were despatches which contained information of importance with respect to the island, but none which could be considered as giving a general account of the island. That was the statement made to me by the Colonial Office, which I made on their authority, and which I believe to be strictly correct. I now pass to another point, namely, that with respect to the statement that there were other despatches from that and the other islands which it was the intention of the Secretary of State to lay on the table of the House without delay. That statement was made on the 8th of February. On the 9th of February the Committee over which the noble Lord presided made an order for the production of papers relating to the West Indies. The only charge made in regard to the production of those papers was, that instead of having those papers prepared for the table of the House, it was thought better to have them prepared for the Committee; and directions were accordingly given that all papers with respect to Jamaica and the other sugar-growing colonies which were of the slightest importance, should be prepared for the Committee. It is true, as stated by the noble Lord, that it was not until the 8th of March, a month afterwards, that all these papers, which were very voluminous, and which required to be sorted and printed, were communicated to the Committee; but it was not then denied that all these despatches, including that particular one which enclosed the memorial from the western part of Jamaica, on which there has been so much said—all these despatches had been communicated and printed for the Committee. The only pretext which the noble Lord has for making this a subject of remark is, that there did elapse this period of a month after the papers were required. But I repeat that the order was given next day, that the papers should be prepared with all due diligence; and I put it to the noble Lord and to the House, whether there is anything in his statement to entitle him to say that the conduct of the Colonial Office has been in any degree inconsistent with the pledge which I gave in their name on the 8th of February? This matter does not properly lie within my province; but the letter which the noble Lord wrote to me this morning having stated that he intended to call attention to the subject this evening, I went to the Colonial Office and made the necessary inquiries. The result is, to confirm the impression which existed in my own mind—to confirm that of which I never had the slightest doubt—that the noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonies, in this as in all matters, whether public or private, has acted with unquestionable honour, with invariable sincerity, and entirely in accordance with his duty to the House and the country.

SUGAR DUTIES.

MR. BARKLY observed, that the present sugar duties might expire before the resolution now under discussion could go through Committee, and a Bill founded on it be passed. He begged to ask whether the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had taken the circumstances into his consideration, and what course he proposed to adopt?

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER replied, that there was only one course open. The Government were endeavouring to pass the resolution as fast as possible, so that it might be reported to the House forthwith. In cases where duties were lowered on the one hand, and raised on the other, the duties were taken under Treasury orders when the resolution was reported to the House.

MR. BRIGHT understood from what the right hon. Gentleman had said, that whether a duty was raised or lowered, the new duties could be taken on the report of the resolution. When the corn duties were before the House, the question being one of protection, that course was not taken; and it seemed to be then held that such a course should be reserved for cases where the question was one of revenue. The present question was not brought forward with a view to improve the revenue; and he did not think it desirable to take that course which was not observed with respect to corn. He wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he had made arrangements with the very numerous parties who had cargoes of foreign sugar coming into the country, which cargoes were on their way, and which they expected to have entered after the 5th of July, at a duty of 18*s.* 6*d.* per cwt., instead of the duty now proposed by the Government? On the 3rd May, the noble Lord at the head of the Government had stated expressly that Ministers were not going to alter the Bill of 1846; and since that time he (Mr. Bright) had received letters from merchants stating that in the belief that the measure of 1846 would be adhered to, they had sent cargoes of sugar to this country. He wished to know whether Ministers considered it consistent with their duty to propose a new duty within three weeks after the declaration that the old duty would not be altered, without making an arrangement with importers, so that they might not be deprived of the 1*s.* 6*d.* per cwt., to the benefit of which they were entitled by the Act of 1846?

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER observed, that it was perfectly true the course described by the hon. Gentleman had been taken on the corn duties. The general rule of acting on the resolution of the Committee had been stated on that occasion; but a departure was proposed in that case from the general rule. The same rule was followed with respect to all the customs articles in 1842.

MR. ROBINSON wished to know, supposing any importer refused to pay the higher rate of duty, if this measure had not passed into a law, what means had the Government of enforcing payment?

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER replied, that the Government would simply not allow the goods to be entered.

MR. BRIGHT wished to know if the Government intended to make any arrangement by which parties bringing in sugar under the expectation of entering it at 18*s.* 6*d.* would be allowed to enter it at 18*s.* 6*d.*, especially as the noble Lord at the head of the Government had stated that it was not the intention of the Government to alter the sugar duties?

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER had already answered the hon. Gentleman. The question was, in fact, whether foreign sugar now in bond and cargoes afloat, to use the technical expression, were to be admitted at a duty of 18*s.* 6*d.* per cwt. His answer was, that according to the invariable practice, when the duty was raised from 18*s.* 6*d.* to 20*s.* per cwt. on foreign brown clayed sugar, the additional duty would be levied, whether notice was given or not (it was never given), on all the sugar liable to the duty.

MR. R. C. HILDYARD wished to ask the Attorney General, if a party tendered on the 5th July, the only duty which by law, as distinct from a resolution of that House, could be demanded, and refused to pay any higher duty, and the Government refused to release his goods, whether the Government would be liable for any loss the party might sustain in the matter? This was a question not of precedent, but of law.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL apprehended that a resolution of that House would be recognised by the subsequent passing of the Bill which had been founded upon it. The rule would be this—if the House of Commons resolved that a given duty should be imposed upon goods before they were entered for home consumption, it was fairly to be presumed (and the practice proceeded upon the presumption) that the House would pass a Bill founded upon that resolution; and, as the Bill related to a matter of money, it was not supposed that the other House would interfere with the resolution. The Government would therefore give an order to officers to act on that resolution. He admitted that an action would lie; but before it would be ripe for investigation the Act of Parliament would have received Her Majesty's assent that from and after the 5th of July such and such duties should be levied, and that would be a perfect answer to the action.

MR. HUDSON recollected when no duty was payable upon corn for a day or two; and that the decision of the court in a case in which it had nevertheless been levied was, that not only the duty should be refunded, but all loss and detriment suffered by the party should be made good by the Government also.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL said, that the ground of that decision was in truth a confirmation of the view he took of the present case. The case to which the hon. Member referred was one in which an action was brought against the custom-house officers for refusing to allow corn to enter for home comsumption without payment of any duty whatever; and for this simple reason—a resolution having passed that House during the Administration of the right hon. Baronet opposite (Sir R. Peel) for an alteration of the duties on corn, a mistake had occurred in drawing up the resolution, by which an interval of one day was allowed to elapse between the expiry of the old duties and the imposition of the new, and the Government having levied duty upon corn entered on that one day, were obliged by the court to refund it. If the resolution had gone back to the moment when the old duty expired, that would have been a perfect defence.

THE RIGHT TO PUT QUESTIONS.

Mr. NEWDEGATE, seeing the right hon. Baronet the Chairman of the Committee on Commercial Distress, in his place, wished to know whether it were true that the Committee had refused or intended to refuse to examine as witnesses Mr. Alison, Sheriff of Renfrewshire, and Mr. Blacker, an Irish gentleman?

Mr. SPEAKER remarked, that the hon. Member's question referred to some part of the proceedings of the Committee not yet reported to the House.

Mr. NEWDEGATE said that one report had been made to the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: But not the evidence.

Mr. NEWDEGATE wished to know whether the refusal of the evidence of those gentlemen was previous to that report being made?

Mr. SPEAKER said, the hon. Gentleman could not put the question.

SUGAR DUTIES—ADJOURNED DEBATE (FIFTH NIGHT).

The Order of the Day for the resumption of the Adjourned Debate upon the Sugar Duties having been read,

Sir R. H. INGLIS said, that with the exception of his hon. Friend the Member for South Essex (Sir E. N. Buxton), who spoke with hereditary zeal and talent on the subject, and the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets (Mr. G. Thompson)—he might also refer to a speech from his hon. Friend the Member for Droitwich (Sir J. Pakington) — hardly any hon. Member had uttered a word which had reference to the great question so directly involved in the subject before the House, as to be really, in his opinion, inseparable from it. He meant the slave trade and its abolition. The hon. Gentleman the Chairman of Committees had paid him an unintentional compliment when he said that he almost looked at every question as if it had some connexion with the slave trade. He certainly should always watch every subject which appeared to have reference to that great sin and great crime: and it was because be felt that the sugar question was directly connected with the slave trade that he now desired to address the House. His complaint was, that this question had been hitherto discussed with reference to economic interests alone. The great error into which they had latterly fallen was the practice of discussing questions with reference to material interests alone, and not with a view to their moral consequences. He therefore wished to view the supply of sugar, not so much in reference to the prices at which it might be sold here, as to the sources from which it was to be furnished; and this opened the question not only of humanity and principle, but of national greatness also. It was one of the most remarkable sayings of Buonaparte, when he wished to exalt the position of the French nation, that what they wanted were "ships, colonies, and commerce." The present policy of this country was destroying all of these. The hon. Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire said the other night that they had heard quite enough of "Rule, Britannia;" and what was his deduction? That "the navigation laws," that system upon which had been founded the great colonial and commercial empire of Britain, "ought to perish." Another Gentleman attacks the colonies as "sinks of the wealth of England." He (Sir R. Inglis) warned them that when they had destroyed the Navy of the Queen, and the commercial marine of her subjects—when they had destroyed the colonies of England, the commerce of England would surely perish along with them. He did not mean to deny that, to the consumers of sugar amongst his poorer fellow-countrymen, the price of it was a most important element in their domestic comforts. But the question now at issue, was, not whether they should increase the price to the consumer, but whether they should continue to diminish it; for it should be remembered that the poorer classes were paying a certain price at present which was not sought to be raised—at all events, beyond the level which, up to the very latest legislation, had been taken. But, considering, as he did, that the price of sugar should not be placed in competition with the blood which was paid for it, he would be no party to giving his countrymen cheap sugar upon such terms. As to the mode in which the question had been argued, and the copious references which had been made to figures, he should only say that Mr. Canning used to assert that there was no proposition which he would not undertake to prove by figures. And he (Sir R. Inglis) had seen the most able men in the House —he would hardly even except his right hon. Friends opposite, the right hon. Baronets the Members for Tamworth and Ripon—appearing, in the use of statistical returns and of tables of figures, sometimes to puzzle themselves, and, still more frequently, to puzzle their hearers. He would not, therefore, presume to deal with figures farther than this, namely, that a duty of ten shillings per cwt. was, within a fraction, one penny per lb.—and was the question of the slave trade to be decided by such a difference? As to the arguments founded upon other calculations which had been used in the course of the debate, he should say that no increase in the revenue or diminution in price to the consumer, ought to be obtained by the price of the blood of our fellow-men. He well knew, from Mr. Porter's tables, that there was no article, of which the price was a more complete barometer of the consumption than sugar; but if the case were fully known, he hoped and believed that there were few of his fellow-countrymen who would not refuse cheap sugar at the price of the blood of their fellow-creatures. His right hon. Friend and Colleague (Mr. Gladstone) had expressed one conviction, which he heard with deep pain. It was, that he considered that the question regarding the admission of foreign slave-grown sugar had been practically settled, and by it he would abide. Now, believing, as he believed, that this admission of foreign slave-grown sugar had directly increased the slave trade, he must deprecate the doctrine, that this admission of slave-grown sugar was a settled fact, unalterable alike by diplomacy or by legislation. His first consideration was the frightful increase given by this encouragement of slave-grown sugar to the slave trade. His next, was the amount of the sacrifices which, in such cases, had been made almost in vain by this country, with a view to the suppression of the previously existing slave trade. He talked not of the expense of the squadron employed in such suppression, but of the loss of the gallant men who had perished in the enterprise—in vain—if the slave trade were thus to be encouraged—wholesale. And again, he thought of the interests of the colonies of England, abandoned for the sake of obtaining a fractionally cheaper sugar from the foreigner and the slavedealer. He could not consider, that, even as a measure of material interests, his noble Friend at the head of the Government had done all his duty in merely providing cheap sugar for the labouring population of this country; while he was thereby sacrificing the great experiment of free-labour sugar in the colonies, and hazarding the social condition of 800,000 fellow-subjects there. His noble Friend said, that he looked to the interest of the labourers of England, and of the labourers of the West Indies; and, in that view, was content with his own measure. But—not to mention that a wise Government ought to look to every interest as well as to two—the main question remains, does the Government measure involve the encouragement of a great system of crime, or does it not? It is a minor question, whether it does not also involve the ruin of the colonies. He maintained that there should be allowance made and preference given to the productions of our own possessions. What was the colonial empire of England? It was that which distinguished her before any empire in the world. No country had ever before possessed such dependencies as England, and no statesman had ever been so reckless as to discard possessions of such value. His hon. Friend (Mr. Hawes), though Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, seemed to undervalue their interests; and rather to complain that no reference was made to the interests of the English consumer, and that the differential duty proposed was only to keep up the British colonies: and why not? The wisest statesmen of England had thought them worth such a protection. Now, without looking to any other portion of those vast dependencies — considering merely the West Indian possessions themselves —they constituted so much of the national interest and of the national glory as to justify the protection being given which some now sought to confer upon them. His right hon. Colleague (Mr. Gladstone) had said that they were bound by treaties. He admitted that England was bound by treaties so long as those treaties remained in existence and unmodified; and whilst they lasted, England should pay the penalty of her rashness in entering into them. But was it not possible to alter these treaties? Lord Howden had returned, having failed in obtaining that which was the object of his mission; and his mission was to have obtained that for which those great changes in the moral policy of this country had been professedly undertaken. Had it not, he asked, been considered expedient to make those sugar arrangements with Brazil, for the purpose of obtaining from Brazil a commercial treaty in return?

And had they not failed altogether in obtaining it? He could not but feel that when the abolition of the slave trade by England had been regarded as the greatest work of the leaders with whose policy his noble Friend was connected, it was not too much to hope that, not to-day, nor to-morrow, but in a few years, Brazil might be induced, by the strenuous exertions of a Government so formed, supported by the feeling of the people of England, to adopt all our measures for the abolition of the slave trade altogether. His right hon. Friend (Sir J. Graham) had said on Monday, that he was not satisfied that the Act of 1846 had augmented the slave trade What were the facts? For the five years ending 1840 it appeared that the average number of slaves imported into Brazil annually was 32,000. The number imported into Brazil in the year 1847 was 73,000. He said that every additional slave above the average imported into Brazil since 1846 had been imported in virtue of the Bill of 1846. The hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets said that the country "had not yet spoken out upon the subject;" and he seemed to be satisfied with the apathy which existed upon it; but he hoped and believed that the apathy did not really exist even in that House. The few words which he himself had spoken when the noble Lord first mooted the subject, were met in that House with a cordiality of expression and feeling as great as he could have wished. But there were particular slumbers which, at different intervals, crept over the public mind upon many subjects; and which crept over it upon the subject of the slave trade no less than others. In 1806, when Mr. Wilberforce addressed his famous letter to the electors of Yorkshire, he said that—

> "The large share of the national attention which the slave-trade question engaged in 1788, has since been occupied successively by the various topics of the day; and such strange and interesting spectacles have been exhibited at our very doors, as to banish from the minds of most men all recollection of distant wrongs and sufferings."

The same is the case now; yet still he trusted that the great majority of that House were awake and alive to the importance of the interests involved in the present question—not as a merely material question—not as a merely commercial question—but as one involving all the guilt and all the horrors of the slave trade itself in its full revival. He believed the horrors of the slave trade were most imperfectly appreciated by many of those who would willingly concur in the Government resolutions. They neither regarded the horrors of the trade itself, in Africa, nor the horrors of the middle passage, nor the horrors which followed in the Western world, and which awaited the slaves upon their arrival in the country to which they were transferred. Nor did they consider that in addition to all the other sufferings to which it gave rise, there was its tendency to cause one in particular—one which was peculiar to itself—the raising of war in Africa, for the sole purpose of making prisoners to supply the slave trade. They had evidence of that from Park, the traveller, and from every other traveller in Africa, down to the late reports which had been laid before the House, and which showed that not individuals only, but whole communities were seized in war, and sold as slaves. There was much and explicit testimony on this subject taken by the Slave Trade Committee now sitting. In referring to that Committee, he must mention the name of a gallant officer, Captain Denman, who had earned, not only from England but from Africa, a great and just debt of gratitude for the services which he had rendered to the suppression of the slave trade—services which were not as yet adequately requited, even by public opinion. Captain Denman produced a letter which he had received from a female who had been captured, and who would have been, together with a large community, shipped off from Africa as slaves, but for his timely and resolute interference; and in that letter she expressed her deep gratitude to him for having rescued her from the perilous position in which she was involved. He had examined a clergyman on Thursday last, who, though not of the same colour as themselves, was still in intellect and intelligence not behind any man having a white skin; and in reply to a question as to the state of the slave trade with Cuba and the Brazils, he stated, that they could get almost any number of slaves they wanted from the chiefs on the coast of Africa:—

> "If they want slaves, they can easily make up some offence against their neighbours, and burn the town, and capture the inhabitants, which is the usual way in such cases. From frequent intercourse with captured slaves, in every case where I have conversed with them"—

(It is the Rev. Edward Jones, in his answer 7,221)—

> "they have been persons captured in war, the town has been surprised, and burnt down, and they have been taken."

He then referred to the memorable case of one individual, a captured slave, now the Rev. Samuel Crowther. He would ask—wa there any distinction in feelings or in rights between their own people, whom they felt bound to protect from such outrages, and the inhabitants of Africa? The Rev. Samuel Crowther, to whom he had just alluded, had been himself sold into slavery in his youth, and had recently gone out as a chaplain with Captain Trotter to the Niger—he had since proceeded as a missionary to Abbeakoota—and one of the first persons whom he met with on his arrival there was his mother, whom he had not seen or heard of since he had parted from her on the dreadful night when he had been made a slave. This individualised the outrage and the suffering; but this individual case was but one of tens of thousands—100,000 slaves at the least were yearly imported into the slave countries from the coast of Africa. He believed that the actual number made slaves and shipped off, was far beyond that amount; and in all those cases they had those horrid atrocities—the burning of the villages—the hurrying of the captives to the coast—the tying of them together—and then all the sufferings of the middle passage. Accounting for the losses which took place before the arrival of the slaves in Cuba or Brazil, he believed that three times that number were taken away. Of the entire number, one-third at least died on the journey to the coast, and another third on the passage across. Dr. Cliffe stated 35 per cent as an average; but he gave one instance, out of 160 slaves embarked, of only 10 being landed. The noble Lord the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs stated, that he understood that from 20 to 25 per cent of the slaves taken on board died on the passage. Other witnesses supposed the proportion to be 12 per cent in a voyage of a month; but even that mortality, which was the lowest stated by any one, was so great that if it were universal, the entire human race would be almost exterminated in a single year. He willingly believed that the House forgot these things; and he was sure that, with an adequate sense of the evils of the slave trade, very few indeed could be found who would give their sanction indirectly, still less to give it directly, to any measure which could have a tendency to encourage such a system. But when these considerations were practically disregarded, he thought that they ought practically to be brought under the attention of the House. He held in his hand one of the most interesting works which he had ever read. It was called *Fifty Days on Board a Slave Vessel;* and he would beg leave to read a few passages from it. [The hon. Member read an extract describing the sufferings of the slaves during the first night on board, when 400 wretched persons were confined in a hold twelve yards in length, seven in breadth, and three and a half in height, and they clung to the small iron gratings to get air; and one morning no less than fifty-four mutilated bodies were found strewed over the deck, and were immediately thrown overboard. The hon. Baronet became so overpowered with his feelings as to be for some moments unable to proceed. He then continued:] If even at a safe distance from such scenes, one can hardly read of them without emotion, what, he would ask, must be the feelings of those who actually witnessed them? He solemnly believed, that if those things could be seen and felt as they were there described, no one in that House would be found willing to countenance any measure which tended to promote the slave trade. He was not one of those who undervalued the evils of the slavebreeding system; but that system was unconnected with the atrocities which he had been describing. The slavebreeding States were guilty of a great sin; but when the opponents of the slave trade were reproached with inconsistency, because they smoked tobacco which came from Virginia, or used cotton from New Orleans, or rice from Carolina, he begged to say, that the question of slavery in America was a totally different thing from that of the African slave trade. The greater part of the slaves there were not sold away from their country: at all events, there was not the midnight war—there was not the passage in chains to the coast—there was not the middle passage. He objected to the use of slave-grown sugar, not so much because it encouraged slavery, as because it encouraged the slave trade. He had stated over and over again, that, whether for good or evil, he was not answerable for that great measure—the emancipation of the slaves. He had never concurred in the first proposition on which that measure was founded—that "man can have no property in man." He need not trouble the House farther on that point; he would only say, that it seemed to him to be an assertion in contradiction to that condition which the Bible had, at one time at least, permitted and regulated; and, in immediate reference to the present subject, he would always maintain that there was a great difference between the slave trade carried on to supply slave labour for the cultivation of sugar, and the slavery in the slavebreeding states, used for the raising of rice, tobacco, and cotton. He had intended, at at earlier period, to state the case of the *Salvator*—what a name for such an enterprise!—where all the slaves on board had perished on the voyage; but it was unnecessary to do more than remind the House of so well-known an instance of the horrors of this trade. Having occupied so much of the time of the House on this part of the subject, he would not dwell on the treatment which the slaves received in Cuba and the Brazils; but he could not pass over what he considered to be the gross inconsistency of Her Majesty's Government—and in this charge he should include the Members of the late Government, who were parties to the last Bill—in keeping, at an expense of 300,000*l.*—which, he should add, he did not grudge—a squadron on the coast of Africa, in order to prevent the slave trade, and with the other hand giving an encouragement to the produce of the labour of those slaves who escaped their cruisers. He held in his hand extracts from speeches of the noble Lord at the head of Her Majesty's Government, and of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, on this subject. The right hon. Gentleman, speaking on the Motion of the hon. Member for Dumfries for a reduction of the duty on foreign sugar on the 25th of June, 1840, made use of these words:—

> "The question which he had to ask himself was this—whether he could consent to give such a stimulus to slave labour in Brazil, as would be afforded by throwing open the markets of this country to the produce of their slave labour?"

And the right hon. Gentleman stated that he could not do so. He knew that it was useless to quote *Hansard* on such occasions; but if the characters of public men were public property, he did not know why their opinions in 1840 should not have as much influence as those which they expressed now. He could not leave this part of the subject without quoting a remarkable expression made use of by the noble Lord at the head of Foreign Affairs, on Monday last, and which he had written down at the time. The noble Lord said—

> "Her Majesty's Government would never be a party to any proceeding—treaty or no treaty—the object of which was to enslave any nation on the face of the earth."

Now, when he reminded the noble Lord that the blacks were entitled to as much liberty as the whites were, or as ever the people of Spain or Portugal could claim, he thought he had a right to call on the noble Lord not to countenance any measure which would directly encourage slavery. [The hon. Baronet read an extract from a circular which he stated had been issued by one of the most respectable mercantile houses connected with the West Indian trade, describing the impetus that had been given to the cultivation of sugar in Cuba in consequence of the passing of the Bill of 1846.] There was one other subject remaining on which he wished, with the permission of the House, to say a few words, and that was, the nature of the relief which was now proposed to be extended to the West Indies. Her Majesty's Government proposed to allot a sum of 500,000*l.* for the purpose of promoting the emigration of free labour. He knew full well how little free emigration had hitherto met the wants of the colonies. He had been present when evidence was given tending to show that unless the greatest possible care were taken, such free emigration would be but another kind of slave trade; and that without a payment to the chief for permission to the people to leave the country, no free labourer would be allowed to go; and this payment, it was stated, would be a virtual buying of slaves. With respect to the Kroomen, who were said to be the most laborious in Africa, they were unaccustomed to agricultural labour in their own country, and they were not likely to become much better in the West Indies; and as to the Coolies, all idea of their further immigration had, he believed, been abandoned. Sugar was only produced within the tropics; it was grown only in climates for which the white man's labour was unfit; and in these climates it was not likely that a black man, who could support his family by two or three hours' easy labour on his own account, would be willing to give the lengthened labour which was necessary in the cultivation of sugar. He thought, therefore, that they could hardly expect to get a sufficient supply of free labour; and that the only means by which they could hope to compete with slave labour was by encouraging their own free labour in the West Indian colonies. Whether that could best be done by the measure of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn, or whether they should adopt a system of entire exclusion of slave-grown sugar, or by any other means, he would not now say; but of this he was perfectly assured, that it was not by any voluntary emigration from Africa that they could succeed in remedying the evil which they had to meet. The hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies had stated the other evening, that if he had the 500,000*l.* to-morrow, he should not know where to get the labour; but then why was the money asked for? He believed that they could not expect the blessing of God upon them while they encouraged the slave trade; and on looking to the cause and to the effect, he thought that this view became still more apparent. The cause involved the unmitigated misery of hundreds of thousands of their fellow-men; while the effect was the mere saving of the fractional part of a penny in the price of the pound of sugar. Comparing them both together, and connecting them with the resolutions before the House, he felt it to be his duty to say that he could not concur in the measure proposed by Her Majesty's Government, and that he felt obliged to give his vote in favour of the Amendment.

Mr. BARKLY was prepared to meet during the debate the usual fate of those who held moderate views on a subject on which conflicting opinions run high. He expected to be reproached by his West Indian friends for making admissions calculated to damage their cause when called on to give evidence before the Select Committee on Sugar and Coffee Planting; and on the other hand to find hon. Gentlemen opposite quoting just so much of that evidence as suited their purpose, leaving the reservations with which he gave it, and the remedies he urged, entirely out of view. The noble Lord at the head of the Government (Lord J. Russell) was pleased to say he attached much weight to the opinions so given; and to complain that instead of supporting his measure, he was their strenuous opponent. Now he thought nothing could be more dissimilar than the measure which he had ventured to suggest to the Committee, of a system of protection for a limited period, and the tinkering up of the Bill of 1846—for he could apply no other term to it—which was now proposed by the noble Lord at the head of Her Majesty's Government. He believed that relief could only be afforded to the colonies by giving them effectual protection; and he was content that that protection should only be continued until the colonies were enabled to supply themselves with labour, and until they got a good vagrancy law. He was prepared to contend that the cost to the country of such an arrangement would be less than that of the Government measure, because as the consumption of sugar was continually on the increase, any protecting duty would be less felt for a brief period, than if continued even in a more mitigated form for a longer period. Besides, in the case of protection for a long period, the benefit would be derived solely by those who had the least claim to it—the cultivators of sugar in British India. This was the view which he had taken the liberty of submitting to the House in 1846. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer complained that no proposition was at that time offered to the House by the advocates of the West Indian interests; but after the rejection of the Amendment of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn, he did not see how any private Member of the House could have brought forward any measure opposed to that of the Government with any chance of success. But if the Under Secretary for the Colonies were right in the extraordinary and paradoxical speech he made the other night—both Her Majesty's Government and himself were wrong—the West Indians deserved no protection at all—it was their own fault—the result of their extravagant management—there was no want of labour—wages, instead of being too high, were not high enough. The hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies had told them deliberately that the present depressed condition of the colonies was to be attributed solely to the expensive system of cultivation adopted, and that labour was in fact not scarce in the West Indies. He had certainly felt much surprise to hear such an argument from an hon. Gentleman who had such opportunities of knowing the facts. He had hardly conceived it possible that any one who had seen the remonstrances and memorials that had been sent home from the colonies during the last year, could have formed such an opinion. He could only account for it by supposing the hon. Gentleman forgot all those despatches, as he had alleged lately. The hon. Member had begun by stating that the colonies had always been complaining of distress; but what were the facts? He had taken the trouble to search the Journals of the House, and he found that between the years 1696 and 1832, or for a period of about 150 years, only two Committees had been appointed by Parliament to inquire into West Indian distress. Since that latter date, two more Committees had been appointed, arising out of the working of the Emancipation Act. In the two former instances, what were the grounds of complaint which the colonies alleged? Before the Committee of 1807, it had been stated that since the commencement of the war, England had captured all the sugar colonies of other countries; that they compelled these colonies to send all their produce to this country; and that when that sugar arrived here, they subjected it to enormous duties. Since the war they had raised those duties from 15*s.* to 28*s.* For nearly a quarter of a century afterwards there were no further complaints of general distress from the West Indies, nor indeed till the year 1832, when the House appointed a Committee to investigate them. At that time labour had been rendered much dearer in our colonies than it was in slave-importing countries; the bounty on the surplus sent to the markets of Europe was suddenly withdrawn, whilst at the same time the laws for admitting their produce into this country had not been relaxed; and thus the colonists were left with all the disadvantage of double freight and charges on the quantity not allowed to be consumed at home. The Committee of 1832 recommended a slight reduction of duty, which gave relief. Shortly after that the debates upon emancipation commenced; and Lord Stanley stated, in that sense, it would operate to the advantage of the West Indies, inasmuch as it would reduce the quantity of sugar they produced. In 1834 emancipation was finally carried; and the planters were subsequently prohibited from obtaining labourers in the place of those who had been withdrawn. Hence another Committee had to be appointed in 1842. That Committee recommended various alterations in the laws, and also immigration. But it so happened that before these changes were made, the Bill of 1846 was passed, and the planters were exposed to a very severe competition with the slavegrowing colonies. The consequence was unprecedented distress, and the inquiry into its causes which had just now terminated. It appeared, from this retrospect, that the West Indies had never received fair treatment at the hands of the Legislature; and that as they formerly suffered from the grinding monopoly of the mother country, they were now suffering from its extraordinary inconsistency on the subject of slavery. The next point he should notice related to the colonial laws for the regulation of labour. The hon. Gentleman informed the House that none of these laws had been disallowed by the Home Government, except those which had a tendency to reduce the labourer to the condition of serf. He denied this assertion. The very Act which the hon. Gentleman quoted as passed in St. Vincent happened to be the Vagrant Act of this country; and what was more natural than that the colonists called on to legislate in a hurry should transfer the laws under which they had been themselves brought up to their Statute-book? With regard to the Crown colonies, at least, this was not the case—they adopted the laws of Antigua where there was no apprenticeship; and he did not think it could fairly be made a subject of reproach, that they had adopted laws with regard to employers and labourers which had been previously sanctioned by Her Majesty's Government. But then, said the hon. Under Secretary—"these laws were actually to be executed by planter magistrates." That depended on the Colonial Office—they might have been allowed on condition that the stipendiary justices alone were to administer them. Before, however, the planters were condemned, he would read the opinion of Lord Metcalfe, a wise and good man, on this very point:—

> "It is not by putting one set of authorities against another that I hope to see Jamaica happily governed, but by general harmony and cooperation; and by a cessation and oblivion of those distinctions which arose out of a struggle that no longer exists. I see no reason to apprehend oppression from regarding the local justices as on the same footing with the stipendiaries."

The hon. Gentleman, however, had challenged him to show an instance where good laws had been disallowed by the Colonial Office. Why, this was the very question at issue; and considering the subject had been so long before that department, it ought not to be said in the year 1848, that proper laws had not been passed for the regulation of labour in our colonies. For five years, however, those Crown colonies had been without laws for the regulation of labour; but he was glad to hear from the hon. Gentleman that since the sitting of the Committee moved for by the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, enactments had been passed against vagrancy and squatting. The hon. Gentleman had astonished him still more on the subject of labour—he was totally at variance with his own leaders on that point, and *naïvely* asked where immigrants were to be got, and who was to pay for them? Why, one of the recommendations of Her Majesty's Government was to guarantee a loan of half a million for the purposes of immigration. He had not much faith in the promised advantages of this assistance: the loan might, he thought, be better applied in effecting improvements in cultivation and in machinery than in immigration. The whole question lay not so much in the cost of labour, as in the possibility of obtaining it. The hon. Gentleman said wages were not high enough: the higher the wages the cheaper the production according to him; and he referred to the experience of this country. What a confusion of ideas! Skilled labour might be high-priced here; but did it follow that high-priced labour in the colonies was necessarily skilled? The hon. Gentleman said the planters ought to encourage improvements in machinery. He agreed with the hon. Gentleman, but the illustration he had selected was rather unfortunate for his case. It was British Guiana with which he was connected, and of which Earl Grey had said, "no country endeavoured to make greater improvements." Certainly Mr. Stipendiary Strutt said, that for thirty years no improvements had been made in cultivation; but he (Mr. Barkly) did not consider Mr. Strutt's authority on this point of great weight; at least it would not have the full effect which his words would seem to imply, because, on the 30th of June, 1841, he reported of this same colony in these words:—

> "The hardest kind of work formerly imposed upon the labourers is now performed by machinery."

Mr. Strutt, in the report stating that no improvements had been made, stated an exception in the case of the plantation Friendship, and he said the planter upon that estate got 7*l.* per hogshead more for his sugar than the other planters. Mr. Strutt, however, omitted to take into his account the expense of the machinery, and the enhanced cost of making the produce. It so happened that he (Mr. Barkly) produced a letter from Mr. Lang before the Committee, he being the very person who had introduced this machinery. Yet this gentleman, in that letter, complained of being utterly ruined by the competition to which he was exposed. If, therefore, as this case proved, the resident proprietor, with capital and with improved machinery, could not succeed, the whole argument of Government fell to the ground. Numerous instances of the same kind could be produced. He had a letter in his hand from a gentleman in Demerara, of great energy and capital, who, before he went out to take the management of his estate, worked in a jacket for six months in a sugar refinery in the City. He put down machinery to the amount of between 6,000*l.* and 7,000*l.*; yet he was unable to compete with the slave colonies, and he reported that the colony was in a desperate condition. Lord Harris mentioned numerous instances of a similar character in Trinidad. On the other hand, the report of Mr. Consul Crawford showed that in Cuba they were introducing the Jamaica plan of making sugar as a great improvement. After all this evidence, which could readily be increased, it was impossible to attribute the failure of the West Indies to compete with Cuba and Brazil to want of energy, or capital, or machinery. For those, therefore, who had nothing but ruin before them, it was rather cruel on the part of the hon. Gentleman to convert their representations of distress into charges against them of want of energy and skill. During the past winter, he attended an execution sale in Berbice of the estate of an old gentleman who, a few years before, had refused to take 60,000*l.* for it, which was offered to him by a noble Lord, a Member of the other House. That estate he (Mr. Barkly) saw sold for 1,000 dollars; and he heard with his own ears the exclamations of the labourers, complaining of their master having been ruined and forced upon the dam. He asked what would become of the poor old man? The answer was that he would go to Mr. G—, his son-in-law, who used to manage the estate. This Mr. G—, it appeared, went over to Surinam, where he got an estate some years before very cheap; but then came the Act of 1846, which raised the value of his property so much that he was now making many thousands a year. Such was the case upon the one hand, of a man who, trusting to the faith and consistency of the British nation upon the subject, was totally ruined; and, upon the other, of a man who, not being so scrupulous, crossed a river, went over to a Dutch colony, and in a few years, through the very Act which ruined the British planter, became a rich and flourishing colonist. With such facts before them, it was impossible to say what would be the effect upon the minds of the colonists of a speech such as that delivered by the hon. Gentleman. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Westbury (Mr. Wilson) had taken a much more reasonable view, though he (Mr. Barkly) differed from him upon many important points. He had stated, for example, that the cost of cultivation in Cuba was actually higher than in Jamaica. If this were so, *cadit quæstio.* Why need they argue it? He would not enter into the question of the comparative cost of production, because it was extremely complicated; but he would remind the House that the Committee had most carefully investigated it, and their opinion, upon the whole evidence, was, that 10*s.* per cwt. as a protecting duty was a fair demand for our own colonies, as against slave colonies, at the present time. Scarcely one hon. Gentleman who had addressed the House on the opposite side of the question to that which he (Mr. Barkly) took, had concluded his speech without an *ad captandum* appeal to the interests of the British consumer. The right hon. Baronet (Sir J. Graham), who had made a most damaging speech against the Government measure, though he meant to vote for it, had resorted to this kind of argument. But, after all, it was nothing but begging the whole question. How would the interests of the British consumer be promoted if our own colonies were ruined? All our Governors stated production would cease in them unless some effectual means were adopted to induce its continuance. How, then, could the interests of the consumer be accommodated if so great a field of supply were cut off? The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hawes), however, argued that because there were greater importations last year than in the previous year, the supply would not fall off; in short, he drew out of this circumstance an inference in favour of the Bill of 1846. He (Mr. Barkly) should have thought, from the experience the hon. Gentleman had acquired in sugar planting within the Colonial Office, he must have been aware that every one of the canes cut last year were planted and cultivated before the Bill of 1846. The hon. Gentleman must be aware, officially at least, that eighteen months must elapse before the produce of planted canes could come into this country in the shape of sugar, and a much longer period before they would cease to produce at all; his reference, therefore, to the fact which he mentioned had not the weight he seemed to attach to it. Both the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hawes), and the hon. Member for Westbury (Mr. Wilson), said, moreover, it was impossible to give the colonies high protection, because such was their power of production that they would immediately produce more sugar than the people of this country could consume; the surplus, therefore, must be exported, and consequently we should still be obliged to accept the same price as before. Then what harm would be done by giving them a high protection? The people of this country would not suffer. True, the Statute-book might be disgraced in the eyes of many Gentlemen by a new protective enactment being upon it; but not more so, he thought, than it would be in the eyes of others by the measure now proposed; which did not admit the same principle. The right hon. Baronet (Sir James Graham) deprecated anything like reaction in our commercial policy. He agreed with the principle of free trade as fully as the right hon. Baronet; and he would add that if he thought there was likely to be reaction from maintaining sugar cultivation in our colonies, he should not support the Amendment. But the strongest ground he ever heard in favour of reaction was that our policy was ruining our sugar-producing colonies. The people of this country were not prepared to sacrifice the West India colonies for the sake of this or that Government. For a time the true state of the question might be kept from the people; but when they saw the colonies nearly ruined by the measures of that House, he certainly feared reaction would be inevitable, and that it might not extend to sugar only, but to other articles. With these observations, he should leave the question to the House most confidently, if he thought it would be judged on its intrinsic merits, and not with reference to party politics or to the position of Government. He begged, however, to point out to hon. Gentlemen who were influenced by such considerations, that the question which the House had to decide was one of far greater importance than the consistency of a Cabinet, or the stability of an Administration. The question they had to determine was, whether negro emancipation should go down to posterity as an abortive experiment, for which fourteen flourishing colonies and twenty millions of money were rashly sacrificed—whether our whole antislavery policy for forty years should be considered a vain chimera for which the blood and treasure of this country had been lavishly and fruitlessly expended.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said, that, although a Member of the Committee which sat for so many weeks upon Sugar and Coffee Planting, and unwilling to give a silent vote, it was not his intention to trespass upon the House at any length. He was the more willing to take this course because the subject had been so fully discussed that it was unnecessary to do more than just glance at some of the arguments which had been urged. He could not, however, avoid stating his belief that no Committee of that House ever conducted its inquiries with a more sincere and single desire to arrive at the truth upon this important subject, than the Committee on Sugar and Coffee Planting. Casting aside all personal and party objects, they were determined to do what they thought the best for the important interest now suffering such extreme distress. It was impossible for any one to listen to the statements of great public and private distress in the colonies without feeling sincerely anxious to contribute to relieve them; and however much the Committee might have differed as to the course it was their duty to recommend to the House, he was satisfied every Member was animated by a desire to apply some practical remedy to the appalling state of things that had been proved to exist. But he could not say the result of the deliberations of the Committee was so satisfactory as their manner of conducting the inquiry. If Gentlemen would look at the resolutions finally adopted, they would find little in them, except the recommendation, which was arrived at by a very narrow majority, of a differential duty of 10*s.* for six years. When the authority of the Committee was quoted in support of that recommendation, he must remind the House that it was arrived at by the casting vote of the Chairman alone; and that it never would have been made, if two distinguished Gentlemen, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Goulburn), and the hon. Member for Liverpool (Mr. Cardwell), had not withdrawn from the room. This was the state they were in whenever a distinct proposal of any protection was recommended—those two Gentlemen uniformly voted against that recommendation; and whenever protection was proposed by them, in an abstract and general form, those who were more ardent friends of protection met them, *dolus latet in generalibus*, by urging that it might mean anything or nothing, and that it might be doing injustice to allow the Committee to recommend protection generally, without stating what the amount of protection should be. If these two Gentlemen had not left the Committee in the lurch, there would, he believed, have been a majority of one the other way; the proposal of ten shillings for six years, being, in reality, objected to by a majority of the Members. But, after all, the important question was, whether, upon the whole, this recommendation was one which it behoved the House to adopt. The question, then, more particularly under consideration was—what should be the sugar duties? On that subject there were three proposals. The first was that of the Committee, namely, that there should be a duty of 10*s.* for six years. Now, he confessed that he objected to that proposal, not so much because it would be injurious both to the consumer and to the revenue, as because he believed that its adoption would not prove beneficial to the West Indies themselves. He was deeply impressed with the suffering condition of those colonies; and he agreed so much in what had been said in the course of the debate as to the manner in which the vacillating and changeful legislation of that House had operated in producing distress, that he would be prepared to run some risks in adopting any measure of relief respecting which he could satisfy himself that it would be salutary and beneficial to the West Indian colonists. If, however, there was one point upon which more than upon any other all the most intelligent witnesses examined before the Committee concurred, it was this—that the best chance of cultivating sugar successfully in those colonies must depend upon the ability to bring the rate of wages to a reasonable level—a level which would be at once fair to the labourer, and profitable to the employer; and that nothing would so preclude the possibility of the successful termination of the struggle now going on for that purpose in the West Indies, as the notion that a considerable degree of increased protection was guaranteed to the planters for a considerable period. The hon. Member for Leominster (Mr. Barkly) seemed to be deeply impressed with that truth; and, accordingly, differing from the greater number of the West Indian body, that hon. Member limited his recommendation of increased protection, when giving his evidence before the Committee, to the adoption of a duty of 10*s*. for two years, after which he then desired that the dropping scale should come into operation. He had understood the hon. Gentleman to say that he had since somewhat modified his opinion, and that he now recommended a 10*s*. duty for three years, to cease altogether at the expiration of that period. [Mr. Barkly said, if he had made a proposition, that would have been it.] He doubted very much whether that proposal would have been satisfactory to the West Indian body generally: he suspected that they would prefer the plan of the Government. The hon. Gentleman, in common with the Government, and indeed almost every one who had addressed the House, except the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford, contemplated a speedy equalisation of the duties upon colonial and foreign sugar. The object of the House, then, should be to prepare the colonies during the interval, for that competition which was inevitably coming upon them, which could not be done by restoring protection and increasing the cultivation of sugar, under a system whose existence must necessarily cease. If they adopted the course of affording increased protection, it would operate, not on the West Indies alone, but on the great continent of India. If any measure of that kind were applied to the West Indies, it must be applied also to the East. The injury arising from such a fixed and artificial system could not be confined to the West Indies; and he felt satisfied that the result, as regarded the East Indies, would be most disastrous. In the latter, no less than in the former, the withdrawal of an artificial and short-lived stimulus would inflict great injury on the interests which had been thus stimulated, under a system which was not meant to last. These were some of the reasons which induced him to doubt exceedingly the soundness of the position so frequently advanced, that they would be conferring real benefit on the West India planter by largely increasing the amount of protection which Parliament had determined to give him, during the interval which he had to prepare for the competition to which he was ultimately to be exposed. The next proposal made to the Committee was that of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford (Mr. Gladstone), whom he did not then see in his place. That right hon. Gentleman stated it to be his opinion that the most advisable course for Parliament to pursue was to continue the present duty for six years, and then allow it altogether to cease. Now he believed, that had not that opinion proceeded from so high and respectable an authority, it would have been unlikely to meet with the approbation of the West Indian interest. The West Indian body were then, he believed, unanimously of opinion— ["No, no!"] Well, they were at least very generally of opinion that, as between that proposal and the plan of the Government, the latter was preferable. And, indeed, he was not surprised at that conviction. The scheme of the right hon. Gentleman afforded no immediate benefit or relief to the West Indies, while, in the long run, it would, he believed, be less favourable both to the consumer and to the revenue than the scheme proposed by the Government. One of the most important distinctions between the two schemes was this — that the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman would terminate in an equalisation of the sugar duties at 14*s*., while that of the Government would terminate in their equalisation at 10*s*. He would now proceed to speak more particularly of the plan of Her Majesty's Government. And in the first place, he must concede to those who had raised the objection, that any alteration at all in a scheme of sugar duties, so recently and deliberately adopted as was the scheme of 1846, was in itself no inconsiderable evil; and he must own that he long hesitated before he could make up his mind that it was the duty of the Government to propose, or of the House to consent, in any way to alter the scheme of duties adopted at that period. But he thought that, upon the whole, the House would act wisely in adopting an alteration of the measure of 1846 to the extent and within the limits that had been proposed by the Government. He did not think the measure proposed was inconsistent with the spirit of that of 1846. The proposal of the Government in 1846 was to obtain an equalisation of the sugar duties at no very distant period; but in the meantime to give to the colonists a certain advantage which would enable them to prepare for the coming struggle. Now, it could not be denied that the hopes and expectations which had been very naturally entertained when Government adopted the Bill of 1846 had been clouded, and to a certain extent disappointed. That general convulsion which had fallen upon Europe, and affected every branch of industry and commerce, must necessarily have pressed with still greater severity on that interest which had at all times been the least solid and the most precarious of all the interests connected with British industry—the sugar-growing interest in the West Indian colonies. It was not foreign to the case to remind the House of the notorious fact, that at all times in their history, whether under a system of slavery or of free labour—whether under absolute protection or a modified system of protection—the cry of distress from the sugar-planting colonies of the West Indies had been both loud and frequent. In saying this, he had no wish to deny that the present distress exceeded any previously recorded, or that it was the duty of the Legislature to apply itself most earnestly to the providing of any relief which could be afforded. But he thought it would be quite a different case if the distress complained of had fallen upon an interest which had hitherto been vigorous and prosperous, and not upon one which had at all periods been liable to the greatest alternations of prosperity and distress, and which had frequently come to that House to ask for assistance and support. He thought, therefore, Parliament was warranted in reconsidering—he would not say the spirit of the settlement of 1846—but, at least, the letter of it. It would have been an ungenerous thing, when an interest like the West Indian was in great distress, and asked for succour, not to give them what it was believed would be a relief. He thought that the modifications of the Bill of 1846, which the Government had proposed, would have the effect of affording a certain amount of immediate relief to the West Indian interest, and that in the long run, without risk to the revenue, they would be conducive to the interest both of the producer and the consumer. He was further of opinion, that the more this plan had been considered by the West Indian interest, who were immediately affected by it, the more were they induced to believe that it was for them a considerable improvement upon the measure of 1846. He would also observe—for he considered that a very important consideration—that he did not believe this alteration was liable to the objection which he had ventured to urge against the scheme of the Committee by which a protective duty of 10*s*. was to be secured to the West Indians for six years—he did not think it would in any material degree prevent the settlement of wages in the West Indies on a satisfactory footing—a point to which he, for one, attributed the greatest importance. On these grounds he thought the Government was warranted in pressing, and the House would do well to adopt, the proposed modification of the Bill of 1846—a modification which was perfectly consistent with the spirit of that Bill—which would not be attended with any of the injurious effects which must be produced by a larger measure of protection, as regarded the state of society in the West Indies—and which would give some immediate relief to the suffering planter, and ultimately be more beneficial to him than increased protection, arising as it would from increased consumption. As regarded the question of revenue, he would observe, that although the measure involved an apparent immediate loss, he believed that that loss would be to a great extent made up by causes independent of the proposed changes in the scale of duties. There would undoubtedly he a large importation of sugar at a low price during the present year. Taking that element of the case into consideration, he anticipated no great loss even of immediate revenue; and he believed that while the scheme would be beneficial to the planter, as it unquestionably would be to the consumer, it would not ultimately be injurious to the revenue itself. He knew that the idea of benefiting the consumer had been treated by some hon. Gentlemen with very great contempt. But he really could not bring himself to view the matter in the same light as did those hon. Gentlemen. Very sorry should he be to urge the interests of the consumer, as it were, against the greater interests of imperial policy and of humanity; but when he heard the hon. Member for Dorsetshire speaking of the price of sugar as a question not worthy of any consideration; when he heard an hon. Member even saying that sugar was an unhealthy thing—that it spoils the teeth of ladies, and was of no use to anybody; he must say, that he altogether dissented from such opinions. He believed the price of sugar to be an object of very great importance to the poorer classes of this country. On that subject he fully concurred in the observations of the right hon. Member for Ripon, to which he would add the expression of his belief, that, besides increasing their comforts, the low price of sugar was a main instrument in promoting habits of temperance amongst the poor. It had a material effect in checking the consumption of ardent spirits by inducing the poorer classes to use more wholesome and nutritious beverages. His hon. Friend the Member for the University of Oxford (Sir R. Inglis) had called attention to a portion of the subject which he by no means desired to keep out of sight, namely, the bearing of the policy of the House with regard to the sugar duties on the question of slavery and the slave trade. His hon. Friend drew a distinction between slavery and the slave trade, which he, for one, could not comprehend. With all the horror which his hon. Friend felt in reference to the slave trade—and, indeed, there could not be two opinions as to the unutterable horrors of that accursed traffic, though there might be a difference of opinion as to the best means of putting it down—when his hon. Friend spoke of slavery, he referred to a patriarchal state of things, which he seemed rather to look upon with approbation. [Sir R. INGLIS had said that seeing that slavery was recognised in the book of God, he could not assent to the proposition that it was unlawful.] He had thought that his hon. Friend went beyond that, declaring that he had never acted, and could never act, with those who sought to abolish slavery, because he conceived slavery to be sanctioned in the sacred writings. [Sir R. INGLIS: Exactly so.] He would not trespass upon sacred topics; but with all the respect which he felt for his hon. Friend, he must declare his belief that there was, in fact, nothing in the sacred volume to sanction the abominable principle that man might be the property of his fellow-man. He happened to know something of countries in which slavery existed; and though it might be much more easy to draw a fearful picture of the slave trade than of the institution of slavery, yet—if the brutalising effects of slavery were regarded—if the moral results of slavery were realised—if the killing of the soul as well as the body were duly considered—it would be seen that no tongue could adequately describe the evils of slavery. While, therefore, he heartily joined with his hon. Friend in condemning the slave trade, he could not join in the mitigated censure passed by him on slavery. He believed, too, that the people of England detested both slavery and the slave trade as much as ever, and that if they thought they were to be put down by means of sugar duties, they would oppose them by such means. Some of the strongest and most sincere abolitionists, had, however, expressed the opinion that it was not by a system of duties that their schemes could be carried into effect, and that any needless disturbance of commerce should be most carefully avoided. While upon this question he must remark that he could not admit, as some hon. Gentlemen seemed disposed to admit, that all the efforts to abolish slavery and put down the slave trade, involving as they had done a large sum of money, had in reality been thrown away. He would not then enter into the question whether or not it were probable that ultimately free labour would be able to compete successfully with slave labour; although, notwithstanding all that had been said on that subject, he was sanguine enough to believe that, notwithstanding the disadvantages which attached to the cultivation of sugar, arising from a tropical climate, such, on the other hand, were the disadvantages resulting from a state of slavery, that in the end free labour would break down that accursed system. Nothing could persuade him that the abominable system of cultivating sugar by means of slavery would be perpetuated on the face of the earth. But that was not the only question which they were bound to consider in connexion with that subject. The moral example of England in such a matter was not, he believed, thrown away; and he could not agree with Gentlemen who said it was the same thing whether they directly sanctioned slavery, or declined to break off all intercourse with those who had refused to follow their example with respect to slavery and the slave trade. He did certainly think that it made a material difference that they were not themselves stained with the moral guilt of those who possessed slaves. He believed that the example of England had worked and was working for good, and would work for still greater good in reference to that question; and he never did regret the course she had taken. Now, with regard to immigration, some hon. Gentlemen appeared to him to have rather overstated the advantages which the West Indies might derive from pouring in upon them a great number of immigrants. He thought, indeed, that very great advantages would result, in many parts of the West Indies, from the very power of introducing a certain number; not so much from adding very materially to the number of labourers already existing, as from having that check upon the labourers already settled, which all the witnesses thought would have a considerable effect. Any facilities which the House might be disposed to grant on the recommendation of this Committee for the introduction of immigrants, would be attended with advantages which might not at first be expected from the comparatively small number of new labourers actually introduced. With regard to the vagrancy laws, as his hon. Friend the Under Secretary for the Colonies had entered so fully into that subject, he would do little more than say that he thought it most desirable that the Government should give every facility for restraining bad habits on the part of the labouring population in the colonies. That he might not be misunderstood either on that point or in reference to immigration, he begged to say that he was for the freest immigration, stopping short, and distinctly stopping short, of that point where immigration would become anything like the slave trade. That must be clearly understood. What the Government meant by immigration was a *bonâ fide* free immigration, and not an immigration of the character which he had mentioned. So also with regard to police and contracts, he desired to see as good a system introduced as prevailed in this country, for the sake both of the negro population and of their employers; but he should be strongly opposed to any system which, professing to be a system of police, would introduce in fact compulsory labour; and he believed, too, that if any attempt were made to introduce such a system, a spirit would be roused by it in this country which would compel them to retrace their steps. He had promised to be short: he feared that he had already broken that promise. In conclusion, he hoped that Parliament would calmly and dispassionately consider the proposals of the Government. It was true that those proposals held out no prospect of a great immediate revolution in the affairs of the West Indian colonies. He did not believe it was in the power of that House to apply any remedy of that description; but the Government had carefully and anxiously considered what was most likely to alleviate the existing distress, and to restore prosperity to their suffering fellow-subjects. He heartily desired that, to whatever decision the House might come, that decision would conduce to the ultimate welfare of the colonists. He admitted that they had great claims on this country. They had been true and faithful in all times and under all circumstances; as their fellow-subjects, they now looked to them, as they had a right to do, for such assistance and support as they could afford; as members of the general community, they were entitled to be protected and cared for. He believed that if the House should give its sanction to the proposal of the Government, whatever feeling of disappointment might exist for a time in minds which had been dazzled by greater offers made to them from other quarters, these proposals would be found to tend materially and permanently to the benefit of the West Indies.

Mr. GOULBURN said, the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down began by adverting to the proceedings of the Committee of which he was a Member, and he stated that the report of that Committee, in recommending a 10*s*. duty, represented the opinions of but a small majority, and that if he (Mr. Goulburn) and his hon. Friend near him (Mr. Cardwell) had been present when the decision was adopted, they would have followed the course which they took in the earlier stage of the proceedings, and not supported the proposition of a 10*s*. protective duty. In that statement of the right hon. Gentleman he (Mr. Goulburn) concurred; but as the hon. Member for Westbury had stated that the only question at issue in the House was, whether they should have a 10*s*. protecting duty on sugar or not, he (Mr. Goulburn) felt it right to state, that in voting for the proposition of the hon. Member for Droitwich, he by no means intended to affirm the proposition that relief could only be afforded by a 10*s*. duty. The view which he took of the case was this, that the Government alone could provide efficient remedies; and he was anxious to throw on them, as the only competent persons, the duty of deciding what should be proposed as an adequate relief for colonies suffering under a degree of distress altogether unprecedented. It was not his intention to enter into details as to the distress of these colonies, which had been frankly admitted by some hon. Members, though denied by others, seeing that whatever doubts might have existed before as to the extent of that distress, must have been removed by the speech of the hon. Gentleman behind him (Mr. Barkly)—at least as to the particular colony of Guiana. But there were Gentlemen who assumed that this distress was little worthy of consideration on the ground that it affected only a limited portion of the community. The noble Lord at the head of the Government was of this class. He had stated at the outset of the debate, as a sort of set-off against the distress of one portion of the community, that he had great satisfaction in beholding the almost luxurious ease which nine-tenths of the population of the West Indies were at that time enjoying; and the noble Lord seemed to consider that while nine-tenths of the population were happy and comfortable, it mattered little what might be the fate of the miserable tenth upon whom calamity was heavily pressing. He confessed that he did not consider this a very statesmanlike view of the condition of a colony, to be satisfied as to the happiness of those who subsisted by the wages of their labour, when that was coupled with the ruin of those who employed them, and by whom alone wages could be paid. He would, however, press the House to consider that the distress was not confined to the landed proprietors, and that if they wished to promote the permanent happiness of the nine-tenths, they must take immediate steps to relieve the higher classes. It was not necessary to enter into detailed statements as to the condition of the labouring population in the West Indian colonies; but it was on record that of the whole of that population only one-third were at present addicted to agricultural labour on the several estates of the colony; that two-thirds were dispersed in various parts, living upon their own means, availing themselves of the excellence of the climate and the fertility of the soil to lead a life of indolence and ease. He had himself communicated with persons of respectability, recently arrived from the colony of Jamaica, who had assured him that in that portion of the community which had divorced themselves from the cultivation of the land, there was a degree of retrogression in civilisation, a neglect of morality and of all means of education, a general immorality, an abandonment of all religious obligation, which were entirely inconsistent with the permanent happiness of any class whatever. Neither was it only on the moral condition of that class of the population that this distress operated. It had, indeed, been stated in that debate, that there had been no expression of opinion on the part of the lower orders, as to the fact of the alleged distress pressing upon them. Those who attended to the concerns of Jamaica could not, however, be ignorant that there had been in that island a large public meeting to represent the distress, which Gentlemen in that House thought applied only to the higher classes of society. On the 20th of April a meeting was held at Kingston, in Jamaica, at which many thousand persons attended. It comprised persons of every order and of every class, merchants, tradesmen, artisans, and the humblest labourers, all assembled together to express by resolutions, to be afterwards submitted to Parliament, the distress under which they laboured; and he might be permitted to adduce evidence which would be beyond exception in a question of this kind—he meant the speech of a Baptist missionary—one of that particular persuasion who were supposed, above all others, to be cognisant of the wants and feelings of the labouring population of Jamaica, and who had obtained that influence and knowledge by meritorious exertions to rescue them from the ignorance under which they laboured, and to impress upon them religious truth. The gentleman who addressed the meeting was evidently a man of strong feelings and great acquirements, and he made the following statement:—

> "He came there because he felt for the distress and poverty which was prevailing to so fearful an extent around him. Once this land was the abode of peace, plenty, and contentment. Now, whichever way he turned, he saw nothing but the gaunt spectres of distress, misery, and ruin. If he conversed with the merchant, once wealthy and prosperous, he could only hear language of mourning, lamentation, and woe. If he turned to the middle classes, who once lived in a state of humble but happy sufficiency, he there found distress, poverty, and sorrow; if he regarded the labouring classes, he there found thousands destitute of employment, their children crying for bread, whilst they had it not to give them. That very morning his servant informed him that a gentleman wished to speak to him. He went to his back piazza, and saw a person as respectably dressed as himself, the only difference being that he wore white instead of black. He requested to be permitted to speak a word in private, and then, whilst tears of bitter anguish filled his eyes, he told him that his family were perishing for want of food—that he had one child at home dying, whilst the others were crying out for food. Gentlemen — said the reverend speaker — I knew that man; three years ago he was a respectable trademan, whose credit would have been good in this city for 1,000*l.*, yet now for want of employment he has no other resource than to beg in order to keep his children from starving. And this was no solitary case, it was a fair sample of the whole. Misery was abounding in the community, and it behoved every individual to sink all political and party differences, and unite to obtain deliverance from the heavy calamities which are impending over and threaten to involve all in one common destruction."

In another part of the same speech he

observed, on the peculiar and difficult position of one part of the labouring community—

> "Again, look at the hundreds, and he might say thousands, of poor labouring men in the city who were out of employment, and, as a matter of course, in the greatest distress. He needed not to remind the meeting that the position of the working men in our towns was very different to the position of the labourers in the mountains; there they may by failure of cultivation lapse into a state of semibarbarism, but they could never be starved; the country labourer could pick the fruit which grew in rich spontaneous luxuriance on the trees: he could dig his yams, and cut his plantains to eat; he could go to the spring and obtain water to drink; he could pick up wood to dress his food; but here nothing is to be obtained without money; he cannot get a yam, cocoa, or plantain, no, not even a mango, without money; he cannot obtain a shed to shelter him from the burning sun by day, or the unwholesome dews of night, without money; he cannot get a stick of wood to boil his pot, nor even a drop of water to cool his parching tongue, if he had not money. All this suffering, all this privation and misery, had been for months accumulating, and was now being endured in this city; and it was only because the people were most submissive, patient, and enduring, that they had borne so much with so much silence—only because they were amongst the most loyal of Her Majesty's subjects, that some outbreak had not before now attested the depth of their miseries."

When that was the situation of that portion of the people of Jamaica who inhabited the towns, and when this demoralised state prevailed amongst the greater part of those who inhabited the country, let it not be said that nine-tenths were in a state of prosperity and happiness disentitling them to the indulgence and consideration of Parliament. But the House had been told by the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, that the abundance and cheapness of colonial produce was an essential element in the happiness of the people of this country. In that proposition they were all agreed. The cheapening of the particular commodity of sugar was an essential element in the prosperity and happiness of the people of this country; but they did not mean by cheapness that depression of price which might be obtained by the destruction of the capital of the individuals who produced the sugar. A cheapness thus obtained, though an undoubted temporary advantage, must lead hereafter to an advancement of price, which would be so much the more difficult to bear, because the people having been accustomed to large and extensive consumption, the aggravation of price would impose a privation previously unknown. He could not but think that the best mode of ensuring the continued cheapness of the commodity to the people of this country, would be to rescue the colonies from the difficulties in which they were placed, and thus to enable them amply to supply the general wants of the community. Suppose, as a necessary consequence of the present state of things, that the produce of only one of our colonies in the West Indies was withdrawn from the market of the world—the produce of Jamaica, say from 30,000 to 40,000 tons—what would be the effect on the price of sugar: would it not rise to the price of former times? He spoke not without authority on this subject—we had a pregnant example before us in St. Domingo: when that island ceased to be a sugar-producing colony, a large quantity of produce was withdrawn from the market of the world, and what was the immediate consequence of that withdrawal? The average price of sugar rose to 65*s.* to 70*s.* per cwt., and until the deficiency created by the destruction of one colony had been supplied by the increased exertions of the British colonies, the consumers of the commodity underwent suffering and hardship; and he was morally convinced — indeed it was capable of proof, that if we did not, by our interference, prevent that abandonment of property which must necessarily be the result of the present distress, the price of sugar would be so enormous as to operate disastrously on the working population, whom it was proposed to benefit by the cheapness. He knew not if any Gentleman, in the consideration of this subject, had ever turned his attention to the report made by the Committee of the House on West India distress in the year 1832. That laid down distinctly what the real basis of compensation for the injuries which the colonies sustained ought to be. It stated that the compensation ought to be limited to the enhancement of the cost of production which had been produced by the legislation of this country. He would apply the same principle to the present distress. He said that you, having enhanced the cost of production, were bound to make compensation to that extent. He knew the hon. Member for Westbury would say that the cost of production in the West Indies was not greater than in Cuba. He had asserted, that the cost in Cuba was 17*s.* 8*d.* per cwt., and that there was no reason to fear the competition of that colony. The hon. Member's calculations were corrected by the hon. Member for Droitwich. How the hon. Gentleman, who knew perhaps, as well as any man, all the matters connected with the growth, produce, and prices of sugar, could say, that the cost of the production of sugar in Cuba was 17*s.* 8*d.*, seemed to him the most extraordinary thing that had occured in the debate. If he had looked at the market price of sugar, he would have found that Cuba sugar sold in the British market for 21*s.*, and, if to the cost price of 17*s.* 8*d.* he added the most moderate rate of freight, insurance, and other necessary charges, for bringing it to the British market, he would find the Cuba proprietor kindly selling his produce to us at a loss, and had been so doing for a considerable time. As to the cost of raising sugar in Jamaica, the hon. Gentleman said, that the accounts had been unfairly taken—that reference had been made merely to the two years of 1846 and 1847, one of which years was a year of scarcity, and the expense was thereby considerably enhanced. He admitted that one of those years was a year of scarcity, but the other year was one of uncommon abundance; and as in the West Indies there was a great variation of seasons, and the seasons materially influenced the amount of production, and consequently the cost of production, it was not unreasonable to take two years, one of extreme abundance and another of extreme scarcity. The House had heard many reasons why the colonies had no particular claim to relief. It was stated by the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, that the Act of 1846 was a deliberate and well-considered Act, and that on account of the consideration it had met with, it should not be materially altered. What were the facts with respect to that Act? The right hon. Gentlemen opposite came into office on the 5th or 6th of July in that year, and on the 20th of July they came down to the House to propose a total change in the system of law as affecting sugar, which had been for some time past in operation. They cut short the experiment that had previously been made, and was then in successful progress, after fourteen days' consideration; at the time, too, when their deliberations must have been directed, not to the question of the sugar duties alone, but to all those other important questions which necessarily press upon Ministers on a change of Government. If he had had to advise the right hon. Gentlemen, he should certainly have recommended them, on so great and serious a subject, involving such vast interests, the prosperity of so many classes, to have taken two or three months for due consideration; but they adopted the other alternative, and in fourteen days pledged their existence as a Government, and the character of Parliament, to the Sugar Bill of 1846. He, for one, gave his assent to the measure, though brought forward under those circumstances; not that he approved of the measure itself, but, thinking that there was a possibility that the interests of the colonies might escape that destruction which many other Members foretold; and it appearing to him as it did to others that there was danger to the general interests of the empire from another change of Administration at that particular period—he felt bound to maintain the national interest even at the risk of some misfortune to the colonies. He alluded to the mode in which the measure had been brought forward, to prove that it did not obtain that degree of deliberation to which a question of so much importance was entitled. And had they not at that moment before them the strongest proof of this on the part of those who brought in the measure? What was the first step they took with respect to the measure of 1846? Was it not one which showed that it had not been considered with due deliberation? They said, they had now found, after a year's consideration, that by putting a charge on brown muscovado, and not upon brown clayed sugar, they had actually inflicted on the British colonist an injury which they never intended—that they had deprived him of the protection, which they thought he was entitled to, of 1*s.* 6*d.* per cwt. on every hundred-weight introduced up to the period at which he was speaking; and, therefore, when hon. Gentlemen objected to pecuniary compensation, let them remember that by this want of due deliberation, and by the effect of the experience which hon. Gentlemen had since acquired, they now admitted that they had, in these two years, imposed on the colonies of this country a charge amounting to 700,000*l.* or 800,000*l.*, which, if they had in 1846 understood the difference between brown clayed and muscovado sugar, they never would have called upon the colonies to bear. The hon. Gentleman proposed to introduce the distinction now, and, therefore, he admitted the previous injury and loss. It had been stated by his right hon. Friend behind him (Sir J. Graham), that the measure of 1846 had been favourable to the revenue. He admitted that it had been favourable to the revenue; it had introduced, at a higher rate of duty, a considerable quantity of foreign sugar, which could not otherwise have come into the market; but it was a gain to the revenue of something like 700,000*l.* or 800,000*l.*, taken out of the pockets of the colonists. If the revenue had been benefited, it had been benefited at the cost of these colonies; and the loss thus sustained by the colonies was one element of the distress under which they were now labouring. Another statement was, that the Act of 1846 had not encouraged the slave trade. If his right hon. Friend had read the evidence taken before the Committee presided over by his noble Friend (Lord G. Bentinck) which sat contemporaneously with the one appointed to consider the slave trade itself, he would hardly have made that statement. There was a witness examined, Captain Matson, a gentleman who for six years consecutively was employed in suppressing the slave trade, partly on the coast of Africa, and partly in Cuba, and he said—

> "Two years ago there was no such thing as slave trade in Cuba; that it is only within these last twelve months that there has been any slave trade whatever."

He was asked if it was the alteration of the law which had produced this change? and his answer was—

> "Yes; it is the alteration in the demand for their sugar that has affected Cuba much more than it did Brazil; eighteen months ago, I think for a year before that, there had not been more than one or two solitary instances of slaves being landed in Cuba."

He, therefore, did not think that Bill could now be defended, either on the ground of the deliberation with which it was passed, or on the ground of the contribution it had made to the revenue, or on that of having had no effect on the slave trade. Another objection had been made to any plan of relief, namely, that if we now attempted, by means of protection, to afford relief to the colonies in the West Indies, we should thereby create reaction, and abandon those principles of free trade which had been found to be so generally beneficial. His right hon. Friend (Sir J. Graham) had justly observed that the dread of reaction was the absorbing evil of the plan; for if it was admitted that the colonies had been ruined, there would necessarily be, throughout the country, a general impression that that ruin was the result of the principles of free trade, and material injury would be done to those principles by the admitted failure of your experiment. But he might ask, if affording increased protection to the sugar of the West Indies within certain limits were itself a departure from the principles of free trade, and in itself a ground to assume that reaction had taken place, how did the Government answer for the measure now on the table? How could they avoid the charge of beginning the reaction, and of setting an example for its continuance? They profess to adhere strictly to the principle of the Bill of 1846; but what is the fact? The duty, which would have been 4*s.* 6*d.* under the Bill of 1846, is to be raised to 7*s.* If the alteration of the protecting duty be an abandonment of the principles on which Parliament had hitherto acted, the charge rested not on his hon. Friend, Sir J. Pakington, who brought forward the present Motion, nor on those who supported it, but on the Government who introduced this measure. They had been told, and that from a very high quarter, that all protection must necessarily be injurious to the colonies, because it tended to increase the price of wages. He thought this was the answer which the noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonial Department repeated over and over again in all his answers to the despatches he received from the West Indies. He did not assent to the principle as true to the extent to which it had been urged by the noble Lord. That high protection, so large as to give an inordinate profit to the planter, might unduly enhance the rate of wages, there was no doubt, because the labourer, seeing the proprietor in the enjoyment of an extravagant income derived from the produce of his labour, naturally said, "Allow me a share of it," and a share in a larger proportion than the proprietor might think just; but would not the same event happen whenever the proprietor of this estate should derive a profit, whether acquired by protection, or the employment of mechanical devices, or superior skill? It was the profit of the planter which guided the demand of the labourer. It was not the amount of protection which you gave him in his distress, but it was the profit of the planter to which the labourer would always look; and if they were to be precluded from doing anything to benefit the planter, lest the labourer should make an increased demand for wages, then they shut out the West Indies from the prospect of anything ever being done for them. On this theory, the estates must always remain without profit to the capitalist, because at any moment that the profit became reasonable, the labourer would require his wages to be raised in an undue proportion. Indeed, if he was to believe the hon. Gentlemen who had spoken on this subject, the question of wages appeared to excite considerable difference of opinion. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Ripon, arguing very justly on the state of things in this country, laid it down as an axiom that high wages and low prices necessarily went together. The hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Colonies laid it down as another axiom that wages in the West Indies were not high enough, and that you required an increase of wages, inasmuch as high-priced skilled labour was essential to cheapness of production. These points had been so well answered already that he would not repeat the obvious reply to them. But they were told they were to rely on an increase of consumption for the advantage of those colonies. And here he must address himself to the hon. Member for Westbury, who gave a curious illustration of the state of the West Indies. He said that if you gave protection, wages would be raised to such an amount that the labourer would enjoy the profit, and the planter would still remain in a state of ruin. Then, he asked, what had been the cause of the ruin under which the planters were labouring? It was, said he, because the Government had permitted the use of sugar in breweries—the effect of that measure was to bring in a quantity of sugar, and so greatly to encourage production as to cause the distress under which the planters were labouring. If that were true, what a happy situation must be that of a colonial planter! If he is unprotected, he is ruined by the influx of foreign sugar; if he is protected by his own Government, his labourers demand a price which renders him unable to cultivate his property to a profit. If consumption of his produce increase, the very increase is a cause of ruin. If this were so, he was sure the hon. Gentleman would see the necessity of the compensation which was demanded—if they were in this predicament that they could neither increase their produce nor reduce wages without loss, he called on the hon. Gentleman to devise some plan by which the colonists were to be compensated for the unhappy alternative in which this result of the law had placed them. He would now come to the consideration of the plan which was actually before them; and here he must say, that when the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Labouchere) adverted to the proceedings of the Committee, he was a little surprised that he did not make a passing remark as to his own and the hon. Member for Westbury's proceedings in that Committee; that he did not explain to the House why they had so egregiously departed from the principle of compensation laid down in the resolution which was prepared by the one Gentleman and proposed by the other to the Committee. That Committee unanimously came to the decision that the state of the West Indies was one of distress that required immediate relief. But the resolution of the right hon. Gentleman and his friends went far beyond that. The resolution proposed by him was—

> "That it is incumbent on Parliament to grant relief to the sugar-growing colonies, and it should be afforded at once, and in such a way as to be made directly and effectually available to the actual planters themselves."

And that—

> "Especial attention should be had in affording such relief to the necessity of placing the colonies in such a position as will ultimately enable them successfully to compete with the cheapest sugar-growing countries."

There were two things in this resolution. The first, that the relief should be immediate, and the other that it should be effectual, so as to enable the colonies to compete with the cheapest sugar-growing countries. Another position was also laid down in the resolution, and that was, that "those possessions which were suffering from high wages and a want of labour" should be entitled to particular consideration. He was now stating what the views of those Gentlemen were, and then he would show how far they were carried out by the Government. [Mr. Labouchere: You will remember that I only moved this resolution as the basis of a report.] He understood that the right hon. Gentleman did move what in his opinion was a fit basis of a report; or, in other words, that the report was to embody the resolution. We had got, then, so far as this, that the resolution required the relief to be immediate, to be effectual, and to be given to particular colonies according to the extent to which they were suffering from high wages and want of labour. The hon. Member for Kinsale said, that nothing could be more unjust than giving relief generally to all the colonies; and he presumed, therefore, that he would vote against the Motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on this occasion, because that which he thought so essential had been entirely abandoned by the right hon. Gentleman. The measure before the House applied equally to all colonies. There was only one other point to be considered in deciding as to the mode of relief, and that was the time during which the relief should be afforded. He would now read the resolution of the right hon. Gentleman, which applied to this subject. It stated—

> "That when the rate of wages shall be fairly adjusted to the altered state of the market, and such an efficient control obtained over the labourers' exertions as competition for employment in a sufficiently supplied labour market is likely to afford;"

—then it was expected the cost of sugar would undergo proper reduction, and the colonists would be in a condition to compete with other countries. Observe, they were not to afford this relief for two years or three years, but to afford it till there should be sufficient competition for employment, and a sufficiently supplied labour market to enable the planter to compete with those of other countries; and, therefore, it was clearly at that time in the contemplation of the right hon. Gentleman, and particularly of those on whose behalf he acted, that the advantages to the colonies should be continued until the period should arrive at which you had been able to place the labour market in the colonies in such a situation as to enable them fairly to compete with the other sugar colonies in the world. Having made that statement, the House would at once perceive how very short of that proposition was the one now before them. Indeed, comparing the proposition with the views then expressed by the right hon. Gentleman, he could not but entertain an opinion that there must have been some conflict of opinion amongst those who were called upon to consider the question—that there were those who took favourable views of the just claims of the colonies, who admitted their claims to compensation for injuries; whilst others, of the severer school, adhering to the rigid doctrine of political economy, forbade any relief to be afforded which was not justified by the strictest adherence to those doctrines; and, in the conflict of opinions, concessions were made, from time to time, until they brought out as a measure the *caput mortuum* now before the House. In judging of the plan of the Government, how far it was calculated to meet the distress, we must consider what was the position of the colonies at the time the recommendation of the Committee was made—what advantages they enjoyed at the very time when they were admitted to be fast sinking into ruin. At the time when this resolution was proposed by the Government, the colonies were in the enjoyment of a protecting duty of 6*s.* a cwt.; the colonies had also the enjoyment of admission to the breweries, which he understood was to be continued to them; but these advantages were greatly counterbalanced by that other provision in the Act which required that the duty should annually diminish by an amount of 1*s.* 6*d.* Now he need not tell any commercial man that of all the evils which could attend a commercial dealer, the worst of all was the having to bring his produce into a falling market; that it deranged all the calculations of industry and of profit; and yet that was the very measure which, by this proceeding, the Government entailed upon those who grew sugar in the British colonies for the market of this country. They came constantly into the falling market, and must, from the necessity of the case, have to dispose of the produce on the moment of its arrival, not with reference to the duty which existed at the time, but to that of the ensuing year. Observe, on the contrary, the situation of the foreign competitor. He came into a rising market—that which was most favourable to the dealer—whilst the colonist came into that which was falling. He had no doubt that this particular circumstance, added to the mistake which Government had committed, had materially contributed to the distress which had taken place. What measures did the Government propose in order to relieve this distress? They offered, in the first instance, a loan of 500,000*l.* on the security of the revenues of the colonists. Really there was something ludicrous in a proposition stated in that manner. They knew perfectly well that the colonial revenue was in a state of almost annihilation; that the distress of the landed proprietors, from whom the revenue was chiefly obtained, either directly from the land itself, or indirectly by the consumption of exciseable commodities, was exceedingly severe; and that the revenue now raised in the colonies was indequate to meet their necessary expenses; and, insufficient as it was, they knew that even that revenue was fast dwindling away. Therefore, when they told him that this loan was to be made on the condition that security should be given both for the repayment of capital and interest, he could not help saying that the promise might sound very well in this country, where the case of the colonies was but ill understood; but in the colonies the proposal would be felt something like a mockery. He further considered that if there was a doubt, as there was a grave one, as to the possibility of usefully employing 500,000*l.* in the introduction of labourers, especially when it was remembered that the Under Secretary for the Colonies said that if he had it in his hands, he would not know where to get a single man— [Mr. HAWES: No, no!] He certainly so understood the hon. Gentleman. But if there was a doubt, and if they consented to take insufficient security—for if they gave the money they would do so—he could not but think that it would be prudent to extend the terms upon which the loan should be granted, and that part of it should go to the introduction of those improvements in cultivation or machinery which might supersede in a great degree the use of labour; not that he undervalued the system of immigration, if labour could be obtained, but because he doubted whether labour could be so obtained. For, he believed that in the present disposition of the colonial labourers, the example of a class who would labour, and the knowledge on the part of the negro population that in those seasons when advantage was taken of the planter to raise prices, labour could be obtained in other quarters, would be attended with beneficial consequences. He believed to that extent immigration would be very useful. With respect to the additional protection offered to the colonies, it was only 1*s.* per cwt. above that given at the time that the colonies were pronounced unable to maintain themselves, and, unless accompanied by other measures, was but a small and inadequate attempt at relief. If the Government should succeed in effecting a reduction of the duty on rum, of which from certain symptoms in that House, as well as from certain rumours out of doors, there seemed considerable doubt, some advantage would accrue to the producer as well as to the consumer; yet, till he had some assurance that the measure would be effectually carried out, he felt it impossible to take it into account. He certainly thought the plan of the Government fell extremely short of the expectations which he had been led to form, considering especially the difficulties with which the colonies were surrounded, and the necessity which existed, if they were to remain valuable possessions of the Crown, that immediate means should be found to extricate them from those difficulties in which the previous legislation of Parliament had placed them. Although he was not prepared to say that the adoption of a duty of 10*s.* per cwt. on sugar was the proper or the only mode of affording relief to the colonial interest, yet, when the question was before the House whether they would or would not approve the plan which Government had proposed, he had no hesitation in giving that vote by which alone he could mark his disapproval of the plan proposed by Government. Perhaps it might be that on a subject of this kind he might feel his personal interests involved, and his opinion might be subject to that suspicion which attached to those who spoke on questions which touched their personal interests. But he could assure the House that he had endeavoured on all occasions on which this subject had been under consideration to divest himself of such feelings. The noble Lord told the House that he recurred with pride to the part which he took in the emancipation of the negroes in 1834. It was an honest pride which led the noble Lord to bear in mind that he had been one of the Ministers by whom that measure had been forwarded. He acknowledged the honour which such a position conferred on the noble Lord. But, on the other hand, the noble Lord would admit that those who possessed property in those colonies—that those who had endeavoured, while slavery was in existence, to alleviate its pressure—that those who, having received the compensation, applied it to the purpose of rendering the negroes happy and useful labourers on the estates where they had formerly been slaves—had also a higher merit to which they could lay claim—not merely that of men embarked in a great work of benevolence, but of those who attained the object in view at a great personal sacrifice—a sacrifice which tended to ennoble even an act of kindness, and which entitled them, he would not say to the benevolent, but to the just, consideration of Parliament. Acts of the Legislature had led to consequences which imposed on it obligations which he did not think this country could refuse to fulfil without a violation of public faith. To the colonists it was indifferent in what form a measure of justice was conceded. They cared not whether it was in the shape of a reduction of duty or of grants of money, or in any other shape which the state of the finances and of the country rendered expedient. But they did think that they were entitled to immediate and efficient relief. It was not, moreover, a matter of indifference to the empire whether the prosperity of those portions of the British empire should be maintained, or whether they should become deserts, to be at some future period, when Parliament awakened from its lethargy, resettled and repeopled at as much expense of life and treasure as had been incurred when they were originally established. On these grounds he felt that the measure proposed by Her Majesty's Government was not sufficient to meet the object for which it was proposed, and he had no hesitation in voting for the Amendment.

Sir R. PEEL: Mr. Speaker, I should most imperfectly express my feelings if, in the course of the observations I am about to make, I were to come to a conclusion, or even to utter a word, which should appear to imply indifference to the condition of our transmarine possessions. With the depressed condition of our colonies—with the difficulties and embarrassments of those who are immediately connected with them in various relations, I feel the deepest sympathy; and sorry should I be justly to incur the reproach directed by the hon. Member for the University of Oxford (Sir R. H. Inglis) against some, that they are disposed to prefer mere pecuniary and material interests to the higher considerations of public policy which are interwoven with this great question. I consider it would be utterly inconsistent with the spirit by which a great empire has been founded—utterly inconsistent with the spirit by which a great empire can be maintained—were we now, in a time of colonial depression and distress, to enter into cold calculations whether it is for the pecuniary interest of this country to maintain our connexion with the colonies. I repudiate all such considerations. I remember that those colonies have long been identified with us—I recollect that they stood by our side during the great conflicts that convulsed Europe in the course of the last century—I recollect during the last century, in 1783, on the declaration of independence by many provinces of this country, these colonies remained united to us, and stood faithful under all temptations to revolt. I remember that during that greater conflict which ended with the downfall of Napoleon, these colonies, on many occasions, bore the brunt of the storm of war—that they were the conductors by which its fury was diverted from our shores. I recollect that in our failures and defeats, as they had shared in our victories, they shared in our dejection. No, I will not do them the injustice to say they were ever dejected and dispirited. They had the spirit of Englishmen, and saw in defeat and failure only a motive for renewed exertions. Their determination was only the more confirmed to uphold the honour and power of the empire. I approach this question, then, with the deep feeling that those higher considerations ought to prevail over mere pecuniary and material interests. Independently of these, there are social considerations of a yet higher order. I utterly reject the argument that because 95 per cent of the population of those colonies are prospering, we can safely neglect the interests of the remaining 5 per cent. The smaller the proportion of the white population, the more important is it for the great purposes of civilisation that we should cherish that population. Whatever may be the temporal prosperity of the negro population of the West Indies, I cannot conceive a greater misfortune to the cause of civilisation, refinement, and humanity, than the decay and ruin of the white population. The white population forms a barrier against the encroachments of barbarism. If that white population were annihilated, the cause of civilisation, of religion, of growing refinement, would suffer in an incalculable degree. It is with such feelings—with a deep conviction of the importance of these colonies, taking the warmest interest in their welfare, cherishing the deepest sympathy with their present distress—that I approach the discussion of this great question. The severity of their distress is admitted on all hands. On all hands a sincere desire exists to provide, if possible, a remedy for that distress. To any of the ordinary objections to special interference on our part in favour of the colonies, I am not disposed to attach importance. I have always felt that the case of the colonies is a peculiar one; that on account of our past legislation, they have a claim to be exempt from rules which are justly applied to ordinary cases. I shall not oppose to the interests of the colonies those of the consumers in this country: first, because the interests of the consumer are coincident with those of those colonies; and, secondly, because no interest of a merely pecuniary character ought to prevail against those higher interests which affect the welfare of the empire.

The severity of colonial distress being admitted, a proposal is made by the Government for the remedy of that distress. That proposal is met by a proceeding justifiable, possibly, under certain circumstances, but, at least, of a novel kind. It is proposed by the hon. Member for Droitwich that we should assent to a resolution, the effect of which is to refuse consideration of the plan offered by Her Majesty's Government—to send it back as utterly inefficient and inept—to say, in substance, to the Government, "Take back your plan; it is so impossible to amend it that we will not even listen to it. Take it away, and return with a better plan; if you do not, there are others who are ready to propose one." You, who support this resolution, object to the present law. You are not content to be passive. You are not content with inaction. You admit that some decisive step is necessary—that the present law must be altered; but you refuse to enter on the consideration of that plan which is proposed to you by the Government. Now, recollect the state of the West Indian colonies—recollect they are suffering great distress; that they are impatient for a remedy; that they are looking to you to satisfy their expectations on that head. This resolution of my hon. Friend implies that the distress can be remedied by legislation. The resolution has no import if it cannot. It assumes that those calamities which have befallen the West Indies, or the Mauritius, or the East Indies, are not beyond the reach of legislation—that the case admits of a remedy, but that the Government remedy is not the true one. Now, if you carry that resolution, there will be great triumph. The vote will be wafted to the colonies on wings swifter than those of the wind; but the very first mail that returns will bring this demand, "What are those more effectual remedies which you, who are parties to this resolution, have to propose for the relief of the West Indies?" To that demand you must give an answer. The noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) can give an answer to the colonists. It is contained in the resolutions of his Committee. I have read the proceedings of that Committee. Occupied as I have been by other Committees and by other business, yet, from the great importance of the noble Lord's Committee, I have read the whole of the evidence taken; and no consideration shall prevent me from expressing the opinion that a flood of light has been thrown upon the position of the West India colonies which could not have been thrown upon it unless that Committee had been presided over by a Chairman bringing to the performance of his duty the assiduity, the zeal, and the knowledge which were displayed by the noble Lord. Now, the noble Lord is ready to propose a resolution which justifies him in rejecting the plan of the Government. That resolution would, no doubt, correspond with the draught of the report prepared by the noble Lord, but negatived by the Committee. The noble Lord, therefore, can personally fulfil the expectations which will be raised in the West Indies by the House assenting to the Amendment of my hon. Friend. But, unless this House has something effectual to propose — something much more effectual than the plan suggested by the Government—the result of our adopting the Amendment of my hon. Friend will only be to aggravate the feeling of disappointment which the colonists already experience. If we assent to the resolution of my hon. Friend (Sir James Pakington), what is it that we intend to offer to the West India body by way of relief? Can we revert to the measure of 1845? Can we again establish the distinction between sugar the produce of slave labour, and sugar the produce of free labour? Sir, I, for one, deeply regret that a further experiment was not made of that measure. I am not satisfied with the argument that the opening of the market of Great Britain and Ireland to slave-grown sugar was of no advantage to those who produce it. I am not satisfied with the argument that the vacuum caused by our diverting free-labour sugar from the Continent was immediately supplied by slave-labour sugar, and that therefore the exclusion of slave-labour sugar from the British market was no discouragement to the production of slave-labour sugar. Whatever our theoretical reasoning on the subject may be, the undoubted fact is that encouragement was given both in Cuba and in Brazil to the production of slave-grown sugar by the measure which admitted it into the British market. The planters connected with those colonies did consider the admission of their produce into the English market a practical benefit; they considered the direct and immediate admission of the article into the British market a greater advantage to them than any indirect benefit which they might receive from the filling up of the vacuum in the markets of the Continent. If I had had the direction of the councils of Her Majesty at that period, I certainly would have advised a more extended trial of the measure of 1845. In 1846 a change of Government took place, and I assented to the measure proposed by the noble Lord for the admission of slave-grown sugar. I assented to it upon the grounds fully explained by me—grounds in a great degree connected with the state of parties at the time, and the public evils in that state of parties of another change of Government within the period of six weeks. But I did not give that vote merely from a desire on general grounds to arrest the evils of another change of Administration. I did not exclude from my consideration the special interests of the colonies, as they could be affected by that change. A protracted conflict on this very question must be the result; and who could doubt that the great alterations made in 1845 and 1846 in our commercial code by the further application of the principles of free trade to many articles of foreign produce, would have rendered the struggle to exempt the produce of our sugar colonies from the application of those principles one of very doubtful issue. Could any Government then to be constituted have given an assurance to the British colonial proprietor that slave-labour sugar would be permanently excluded from the British market? Impossible. The very fact of the defeat of a Government upon the sugar question would have totally changed the position of that question. Their successors could only have proposed an annual Sugar Bill. Every year there would have been a renewal of the question. Every year the colonists would have been dreading the issue of this continual conflict, while the inhabitants of Cuba and and Brazil, on the other hand, would have hoped that its result would be the admission of their produce into the British market. The noble Lord proposed a permanent Sugar Bill, having this good effect at least that it terminated that annual conflict which would have ensued on the subject of the sugar duties, had no such measure been introduced. Had we defeated the Bill of 1846, what would have been the consequence? The certainty of the future struggle would have prevented the application of of capital in the colonies; it would have deferred the establishment of an improved system of culture and of commercial confidence. These were the considerations, as well as an unwillingness to disturb the Government under the very peculiar circumstances under which they had assumed power, which induced me to consent to the measure of 1846. I must now consider the principle of that measure finally settled. Can you now re-establish a difference between the produce of free labour and the produce of slave labour? The Crown, acting upon the advice of its Ministers, has admitted the produce of Cuba upon the footing of the produce of Venezuela and the United States. It has acknowledged the claim of Spain, founded on treaty, to have the produce of Cuba so admitted. I do not perceive in the report of the Committee, or in the resolutions of the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck), any advice to re-establish the distinction between sugar the produce of free labour, and sugar the produce of slave labour. The noble Lord himself, one of the ablest and warmest advocates of the West India interest, sees the insuperable difficulties in the way of re-establishing that difference. But this is a most serious consideration. It compels me to banish from the minds of the West India colonists that hope which the hon. Baronet (Sir R. H. Inglis) is willing to cherish, namely, that the distinction admitted by the Act of 1845 can, after being destroyed, be again established, between free-labour sugar and slave-labour sugar. I have not that hope then to hold out to the West Indies. I have felt it my duty to consider every other measure that has been suggested which may be thought likely to afford them relief. I will take one that has been suggested by the Committee—I mean the reduction of the colonial expenditure. I must at once declare that after having read the evidence laid before the Committee, it has left an impression upon my mind that the colonial expenditure does admit of very great reduction. The public establishments of many of the colonies are founded upon a scale of imperial dignity. When I review the enormous expenditure, especially in the Mauritius and Jamaica, I am prepared to hold out to the colonists this prospect of relief, at least, that there shall be, as there ought to be, a most determined attempt to reduce the public expenditure within the narrowest limits compatible with the welfare of the colonies themselves. There is no justification at any time, but more especially at this time of their distress, for keeping up any expenditure not necessary for their welfare. I wish to see the alliance between the colonies and the mother country maintained and cherished. I wish to recognise the colonists as subjects of the Queen, entitled to every sympathy and consideration to which the inhabitants of Lancashire or Yorkshire are entitled—with the same claim that a wise economy shall be enforced as the rule of government. I say a wise economy, for mere parsimony might be injurious to their best interests: it would be miserable economy, for instance, for the sake of saving some 2,000*l.* a year, to deprive your colonies of the services in the administration of colonial affairs of such men as Lord Dalhousie, Lord Harris, and Lord Elgin. A niggardly reward to men of their eminence would be injurious to the colonists themselves. I doubt, however, whether it would not be just, speaking of the salaries of the governors of the colonies, that this country should take upon itself the payment of them, rather than impose that charge upon the colonies themselves. Having reference to imperial rather than to colonial considerations, this country should, I think, sustain the charge of the salaries of the governors. The governors of your colonies should be independent of the colonists, so far as concerns the pecuniary remuneration of their labours. They should be able to give a free and unbiassed opinion on all measures calculated to favour the colonists, without being suspected of seeking any reward for their liberality. They should also be in a position to overrule the wishes of those over whom they are placed, when a sense of public duty requires it, without running the risk of having their worldly fortunes impaired. With respect to the remaining portion of the colonial establishments—I, for one, would consent to any reduction of appointments or salaries which is consistent with the proper governing of the colonies. But while I thus speak, I beg to be understood as not by any means implying censure against the present Government in particular. I speak solely for the public interest, and am perfectly ready to take any blame which may justly attach to the Government preceding that of the noble Lord, for not having given more early consideration to this subject. I cannot but think that if subordinate colonial offices were made more accessible to the natives of the colonies—men acquainted with their local interests and wants—those offices would still be objects of ambition even with considerably reduced emoluments. Let me not, however, be understood to mean that you are to confine offices in the colonies to native colonists. It is desirable that there should be some who, exempt from local prejudices, may serve as a check on others connected by birth, or purely local ties, with the colonies. But these enormous salaries attached to almost all the offices under that of governor appear to me to admit of a great reduction. I apprehend that this has been admitted by the Government, and that they are prepared to make every retrenchment consistent with the welfare of the colonies. I did not understand that means of relief to be excluded from their general plan. With respect to the police laws for the purpose of preventing squatting and vagrancy, whatever you can do, consistently with justice and the real freedom of the negro labourer, ought to be done. How this can be done it may be extremely difficult to determine, without the advantages of local knowledge and experience.

I will now review the grievances alleged by the colonists themselves, and that which they demand by way of relief. I will take the petition which was presented to this House by planters, merchants, and others, of Hanover, in the island of Jamaica, so recently as December, 1847. They demand the removal of all discriminating duties which their fellow-subjects in Great Britain retain for the protection of their own produce. They say that the British distiller, in addition to the advantage he enjoys over the West Indians, by their distance from the market, has a protection against colonial rum of 9*d.* a gallon. I understand, that among the measures contemplated by Her Majesty's Government, a reduction of the differential duty from 9*d.* to 4*d.* is in contemplation. I cannot, therefore, hold out to the colonists any hope of any greater reduction of the differential duty than that proposed by the Government. I apprehend the Government will have some serious difficulties to contend with in carrying even that amount of reduction. But so far as the amount is concerned, there appears a disposition on the part of the Government to give in that respect a full measure of relief. The next ground upon which it is alleged that their fellow-subjects in Great Britain retain protection which is denied to them is this:—

> "The British shipowner is protected by the navigation laws, and compels your memorialists to pay a freight nearly double the amount they would pay if they were permitted to ship in other vessels. A large amount of American shipping leaves the island of Jamaica in ballast, and but for the protection afforded to the British shipowner, your memorialists would obtain their staves, provisions, and other American commodities at a cheaper freight, as well as transmit their sugar and rum."

That appears to me a very reasonable complaint; but it is rather discouraging to those by whom that complaint is admitted to be just, and who are seeking to apply a remedy, to be told by other parties representing the same interests—

> "The repeal of the navigation laws will be of no benefit to us; the producers of sugar in Cuba and Brazil will derive greater advantage than we shall from the repeal of those laws."

Now, when I find that so lately as December, 1847, the inhabitants of Hanover, in Jamaica, distinctly declared that, on account of the navigation laws, they pay for freights nearly double what their competitors pay; and when, being willing to apply a remedy, we are told it is not worth having—I will pause before I am a party to the holding out of very sanguine expectations as to the power of Parliament to afford relief to the colonists.

It is difficult at the present moment to take any general view of the position of the West India colonies, and of the measures that can be adopted for their relief, because one great element in the consideration of the case is wanting. It is uncertain what course ought to be taken with respect to the squadron placed on the coast of Africa for the suppression of the slave trade. A Committee is now sitting which has taken important evidence on that subject, and it is greatly to be wished that in discussing this question we had before us the evidence, the opinion of the Committee, and the intentions of the Government. A large expense is borne by this country for the maintenance of the squadron on the African coast. Suppose we find that the squadron is, in point of fact, ineffectual for the purpose for which it is destined, we should still be compelled to maintain a certain amount of force in consequence of our engagements with America and France. Nevertheless, if we could convince those Powers that we do not seek to be relieved from our engagements on account of pecuniary considerations, but *boná fide* because the united squadron has proved to be of little avail, it is not impossible that we and our allies might mutually relieve each other from existing obligations, and enter into some new arrangement which might more effectually attain the object which all have in view. I give no positive opinion on this point. I greatly fear that the sudden withdrawal of the united squadron from the African coast would increase the evils of the slave trade; but not having access to the evidence which has been taken before the Committee, I will not venture to express a positive opinion. If, however, we could make a material saving by the withdrawal of our squadron from the coast of Africa, this country would probably be willing to apply a considerable portion of the sum thus saved to other means, if such can be devised, more effectual for the suppression of the slave trade. Any view of the present condition of the West Indies, must be, I repeat, necessarily imperfect whilst uncertainty prevails as to the ultimate decision with respect to this branch of the question.

Two suggestions for the relief of the colonies are offered: one, that a great increase in the supply of labour shall take place by immigration; the other, that assistance shall be given to the West India colonies by means of protecting duties. With respect to immigration I understand the Government to admit the principle of the measure, and to propose that this country shall provide the means, by way of loan, of increasing the supply of labour in the colonies. I understand that 500,000*l.* are to be advanced for that purpose. Though I do not attach the importance which some do to an increased supply of labour, I cannot go quite so far on the other side as the Under Secretary for the Colonies, who said, by way of encouraging us to grant the money, "If I had this 500,000*l.* I should not know how to apply a shilling of it." Nevertheless, I do not attach such importance as some do to an increased supply of labour. What are the facts of the case? The hon. Member for Bristol, whose evidence is very important, says that he is not confident in the efficacy of an increased supply of labour. The hon. Member states that there are in the West Indies about a million of inhabitants coloured and white, and that the annual produce of sugar is only 140,000 hogsheads. That statement seems to furnish conclusive proof that there is in the West Indies labour enough; the only question is, how to take advantage of the existing supply. It is proposed to stimulate the exertions of the present labourers in the West Indies by the importation of fresh labourers. It is contended that this will operate as a moral check upon idleness, and that when the present labourers find that fresh labourers are about to be introduced, they will be willing to work themselves. It surely will require the utmost tact to apply this species of moral check. It appears to me that the importation of thousands of Coolies, or of negroes from the coast of Africa, for the purpose of inducing resident labourers to work is rather a clumsy process. Suppose you effect your object, what is the result? Can the additional labourers obtain full employment? You have added to the resident population of the colonies a number of strangers—brought thousands of miles from their homes—severed from all their natural connexions—unaccustomed to the labour they are to be employed in—not because there was a real scarcity of labour —but that the immigrant might serve as a check on the idleness of others. Well, suppose the check to be effectual—suppose that by these means you succeed in inducing the resident population to work—you must have a superabundant supply of labour, and the unfortunate persons you have persuaded to immigrate will be unable to obtain full employment. If you are to have immigration at all, it ought surely to be the result of private speculation. We ought, indeed, to take every precaution against abuse in conducting that speculation. We ought to determine from what part of the African coast negroes might be brought. We should ascertain what parts of the African coast are inhabited by free negroes capable of forming a judgment on the question put before them—capable of understanding the nature of a contract. The Government ought to take upon itself the responsibility of entering into communication with the sovereigns or individuals at the head of tribes, and explaining to them the object for which immigration to the West Indies is desired, and should also take on itself the responsibility of protecting the negroes after their departure from Africa. If, however, the Government were to undertake the sole management of an extensive scheme of immigration, it appears to me that such a scheme, wanting the nice tact which accompanies individual speculation, would end in disappointment. Facilitate, if you will, the operations of individuals whose particular estates require the immigration of negroes, taking, at the same time, every precaution against abuse on the coast of Africa—against the possibility of originating a new slave trade; but this, in my opinion, should be the extent of active interference on the part of the Government.

Although the sum of half a million is demanded by Government, I hope they will not insist peremptorily on applying it exclusively to the purposes of immigration; but that if they should be satisfied that there are other means by which relief may be more effectually given to the West India colonies than by immigration, they will not hesitate to apply the money, or a portion of it, in that way. It appears to me that there are modes by which relief can be more efficaciously administered than by the encouragement of immigration. The evidence respecting the immigration of the Coolies presents details most painful in respect to their condition on their arrival in the colonies, whilst it is evident that their sufferings during the voyage must have been horrible. If, then, Government admit the principle of affording pecuniary aid to the West India colonies, the mode in which that relief may be most effectively supplied ought to be left fully open to consideration. Some colonies are labouring under great difficulties, owing to the want of irrigation and drainage. In others, great advantage would result from applying remedies against drought. Upon these points we have very important evidence from a British Peer, and a great proprietor in Jamaica, recently returned to this country from the colonies—Lord Howard de Walden. We have also the evidence of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Rochester (Mr. Bernal). He complained, by the by, the other night, of the slumbers of the noble Lord on the Treasury bench, and is himself indulging in a nap.

> " —— Hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim."

Lord Howard de Walden states, that there is a district between Kingston and Spanish Town where a great deal of the finest land possible could be brought into cultivation by making a cut from Springhead to the river Cabre. Three estates would be benefited by the work, which would cost 4,000*l.* The expense of the drain which is necessary to reclaim this fertile land would be repaid in a year or two. Now, I ask the proprietors of the three estates, why, under such circumstances, do you not reclaim this magnificent district by making the drain yourselves? The answer is, "We are impoverished, and cannot make it; we must rely on the British Government." But why did you not complete so profitable a work in the times of prosperity? Because you relied on protection. Because you relied on the factitious aid of protection, you have not made those improvements which you must have made if you had been subject to the wholesome influences of competition. What other reason can be given why the proprietors of these estates should not have made a certain drain at the expense of 4,000*l.* which would repay the whole cost in two years? We are draining away in England, and are content to receive 4 or 5 per cent on the outlay; and yet these West India proprietors have not drained although there would be a return of 50 per cent. The hon. Member for Rochester spoke the other night of an estate in Porto Rico to which irrigation has been applied within the last five years with astonishing success. It appears, that the produce of the estate was in the first year 100 hogsheads; in the second, 200; in the third, 300; in the fourth, 500; and in the following year, 1847, 900. If that can be done by taking precautions against drought—if such enormous produce can be obtained by simple improvements on a comparatively small estate, why should we despair of our West India colonies if similar precautions against the vicissitudes of seasons were adopted in them? By such a course our colonists would be only following the example of Lombardy, the whole fertility of which depends on its system of irrigation. In making these statements in respect to the past neglect, and to the certain profit of obvious improvements, I am relying on the testimony of West India proprietors. Lord Howard de Walden says, that the construction of a certain tramway at a cost of 15,000*l.* would benefit sixteen sugar estates. Now, I wish the Government to consider whether they would not benefit the colonies more by applying a portion of the 500,000*l.* to the encouragement of such improvements as those to which Lord Howard de Walden refers, than by stimulating immigration? I will not abandon the hope that under the influence of competition, improvements may be made which will create a demand for labour of a more healthful description than that of cane planting, and may lay the foundation of great local prosperity in various parts of the West Indies.

I come now to the last and most important consideration—the consideration whether I shall consent to give to British colonial sugar a 10*s.* protecting duty for six years. My hon. Friend's (Sir J. Pakington's) last resolution means that if it means anything. I could not vote for that resolution without encouraging a just expectation, on the part of the West Indian body, that a 10*s.* protecting duty, for a period of not less than six years, would be the certain practical result. All who are ready to give that amount of protecting duty are justified in voting for that resolution. After full consideration of the question, I, for one, am not prepared to vote for that protecting duty. I am not prepared to vote for it, not merely on account of the interest of the consumer, but from a conscientious conviction that it would not benefit the West Indies. Why do I say that my hon. Friend's last resolution means substantially a 10*s.* duty? Because my hon. Friend has proposed previous resolutions, indicating fully his own views and intentions. He proposed, first, that no remedy would be effectual that did not give a 10*s.* duty for six years. He proposed, secondly, that any remedy not being in conformity with the recommendation of the Committee, would not be effectual. That recommendation was a 10*s.* duty for six years. It is true that my hon. Friend, on the night fixed for this discussion, changed his resolution into its present form. But I would ask the House what will be the natural impression of the West Indian body? Will they not say—and justly say—"Although you have changed the resolution in order to gain a few additional votes in its favour, yet you mean a 10*s.* duty for six years; and after you have succeeded in defeating the Government plan, the least we can expect from you as the amount of protection is that recommended by the Committee." I cannot consent to the proposed protection for these reasons. The West Indian body is suffering from a special and peculiar cause, namely, the deficient supply of labour. I am asked to give protection, not to the produce of the West Indies alone, but to colonial produce generally. I am asked to give

10*s.* protection to the produce of the East Indies and the Mauritius, in both of which British possessions there is no deficiency of labour. They are to have the same benefit as the West Indies, although they have not the same cause of complaint. What would be the consequence? You admit that a considerable time must elapse before you can increase the supply of labour in the West Indies. You will, however, apply an immediate stimulant to the production of the Mauritius and the East Indies. They have plenty of hands. There is in the valley of the Ganges some hundred thousand square miles of fertile ground, with labourers at 2*d.* a day. The East Indies and the Mauritius are to receive, in common with the West Indies, this encouragement to increased produce, while they do not labour under the same disadvantage. Their competition will be as injurious to the West Indies in a mere pecuniary point of view as foreign competition. It will be two years at least before the West Indies will get an additional supply of labour, and in the interval I am inciting to competition with them that portion of the British empire which labours under no such difficulty. And what will be the result at the end of six years? I presume that you are in earnest when you propose six years as the limit of time, and that you have no lurking intention to continue the amount of protection afterwards—that it is a *bonâ fide* proposal of protection of 10*s.* for six years—that at the end of that time it will come to an abrupt termination—and that the produce of our colonies will then come into unqualified competition with the whole world, whether slave labour or free labour. How will this affect the colonists of Cuba and the Brazils? Will they relax their efforts, when they feel assured that at the end of six years they will have unlimited access to the British market? How will this protection, so limited as to time, affect the West Indies? I rely upon the evidence of my hon. Friend the Member for Leominster (Mr. Barkly). I was not surprised by his able speech the other night. He spoke with facility and ease—with unpremeditated ability, the result of knowledge and experience. I shall cite him as a witness against a 10*s.* duty for six years; and what can you say in answer to his argument?—

"With respect," said my hon. Friend, "to the amount of protection that it would be desirable to reimpose, the opinion of my friends both at home and abroad is, that the sugar cultivation will not be maintained generally in the colonies, unless at least a protection of 10*s.* a cwt., to continue for a period of something like ten years, were conceded. That is what they consider, both in London and in the colonies, as their minimum. That opinion, of course, has great weight with me, as coming from men who are more extensively connected with the West Indies than myself; but I am not quite sure that such an amount of protection, for so long a period, would be for the real advantage of the West Indies, if it were imposed with the view of bringing them into competition with slave labour at the end of that period. I do not think that it would put us in a better position at the end of that time than we are in now. Even in the colonies of British Guiana and Trinidad, where there is abundant fertility, and plenty of virgin soil, I think there would be much danger in such an inducement to extend the sugar cultivation as that protection would afford. At the present moment, in those colonies, we are engaged in a struggle to reduce the wages, which is the only effectual means of putting the cost of production of sugar on a sound and satisfactory basis. I think the effect of a differential duty to that extent, for so long a period, would be at once to decide that struggle in favour of the negro. I think he would get his own way, and get it probably to the amount of the increased price of produce: there would be an increase of wages tantamount to the increase in the price of produce, and therefore the benefit would go into the labourer's pocket."

Now the last man I have any sympathy with is the well-fed negro who stands out for extravagant wages; and will you adopt a proposal which will give him the victory in this unequal contest? My hon. Friend went on to say—

"With respect to the other colonies, I think its effects would be more disastrous in the end. I have not now been in Jamaica for more than eight years, and the accounts given to me of the state of the island represent it to be in a much worse condition, not only than it was then, but than the rest of the West Indies—almost in a hopeless state; therefore I do not wish to damage their chance of obtaining additional protection by anything I may say. I believe that it would be of assistance to the present proprietors of Jamaica if they got such a protection as that; but if it had the effect of increasing the production very largely, and bringing a large quantity of produce from India, the Mauritius, and other colonies, it would not permanently benefit even the island of Jamaica; it might benefit the present proprietors, who might perhaps get out of their properties with a sacrifice. My own feeling is, that there must be a protection, and for the next two years at least. Nothing less than the amount named would be sufficient to restore confidence, and to induce capitalists here to support the cultivation of the West Indies; it would be quite two years before any reduction in the cost of growing our sugar could be made by the importation of fresh labour. If sugar were raised 4*s.* a cwt. more, by bringing the duty up to 10*s.*, many estates would be carried on; but I think it would be unwise to give that protection for any extended period to the colonies if it be intended ultimately that they should compete with slave labour."

I have, I hope, all proper sympathy with the distress of the West Indian proprietors;

but the national object to be aimed at is not to put a certain amount of money into the pockets of some few proprietors, but to lay the foundation of the future prosperity of the colonies. If we must pay to individuals a certain sum of money, for God's sake let us pay it directly. It would be a thousand times better to put the sum at once into their pockets, than, by giving them protection, to raise the price of sugar to the consumer, and to stimulate a cultivation that is not likely to be ultimately profitable. The proposition of a 10*s.* protecting duty for a limited period of six years is objectionable on every ground — on the ground of its immediate encouragement to the East Indies—on the ground that the struggle with the labourers in the West Indies would be decided against the planter —and on the ground that it would increase the price of sugar in the British market, while it would offer no discouragement to the cultivation of slave-grown sugar. I cannot then consent to the proposal for raising the price of sugar 4*s.* in the British market, for the purpose of giving temporary and delusive assistance to the British planters. The only way to benefit the West India proprietors is to reduce the cost of cultivation, and enable them permanently to enter into competition with foreign produce. I feel that by voting for the proposal of my hon. Friend, I should be encouraging hopes which could not be fulfilled, and therefore I must give that proposal a direct negative. I am confident that if by means of protection we were to give a monopoly of the British market to our colonial possessions, we should not advance a single step towards securing their permanent prosperity. Take the case of distress in 1830 and 1832. What was the cause of the distress in 1830? It was over-production. There was a greater supply than the home market could take off. The report of the Committee of 1832 is well worthy your attentive perusal. It appears from that report that for many years previous to that period, there had been a gradual increase in the production of sugar; that it had increased from 4,000,000 cwt. to 5,000,000 cwt., which was more than the British market could take off; and the Committee expressly say that the only mode of effectually promoting the relief of the colonies was to enable the British producer to undersell the foreigner in the British market. Well, at that period the colonists had a complete monopoly of the home market; there was not a single cwt. of foreign sugar brought in, and yet they were then in the greatest distress owing to over-production. A monopoly of the home market is of little avail unless you can exactly apportion the supply. Give a 10*s.* protecting duty, and you will increase the supply of sugar. If you increase the supply beyond the demand of this country, the signs of declining prosperity will soon be manifest. Look at what took place under the corn laws in 1822 and 1836. There was exactly the same state of things—namely, monopoly of the home market, and with that monopoly a more abundant supply than the market could take off. In each of these years a Committee was appointed to consider the causes of the distress. No foreign corn had been introduced; but the European markets were not open to us, and our own was glutted. Each of the Committees came to the conclusion that legislation could be of no avail. The average price of wheat was so low as 39*s.* 4*d.* a quarter in 1835. The British farmer had a complete monopoly—there was no competition from abroad—and yet there was severe agricultural distress. Again, in 1836, that distress was announced in a Speech from the Throne, and a Committee of Inquiry was recommended and appointed. But again no remedy was suggested, or could be devised. As with corn, so with sugar. By the factitious stimulus of protection you may unduly increase the supply, but unless you can so diminish the cost of cultivation, as to find a vent in foreign markets for the surplus which your own market does not require, you cannot prevent distress, as the consequence of abundance.

If I believed the protection proposed would ensure the permanent prosperity of the colonies, I would willingly assent to it. The case of the West Indies is so peculiar, that if by an infraction of the principles which ordinarily prevail in our legislation, we could give them effectual and permanent relief, I would consent to make the special exception in their favour. But protection is not now the remedy for their misfortunes.

Gloomy as the present is, I cannot contemplate without hope the prospect of the future. I do not despair of the West Indies being able to meet competition. Surely the man is blind to the signs of the times who can believe that the system of slavery can be permanently maintained. What is the state of slave labour in Cuba at this moment. Lord Howard de Walden has lately made a visit to Cuba. He has seen some of the best-conditioned estates in the island. Is there any confidence there in the maintenance of slave labour? This is his account of the condition of Cuba. He is asked by the noble Lord the Chairman of the Committee—

> "Are the overseers of estates obliged to go armed?"

He answers—

> "Yes, I believe, invariably. The overseer had his cutlass and his dagger, and he had three bloodhounds at his heels close by him. I understood it was the custom of the island that no white man belonging to an estate would go anywhere unarmed. They would not go on foot to any distance; but on horseback they have always their pistols besides."

In the United States, the status of slavery is still maintained. Can I believe that the inhabitants of the United States are easy and confident in the maintenance of that system? Why is it that all discussion upon this painful subject is put down? Why is it that the abolitionists of slavery are tarred and feathered? It is because its advocates have no confidence in the maintenance of this crying evil. That country cannot be blessed which maintains this cursed system of slavery. There have been incessant complaints in our own colonies for the last hundred and fifty years while slavery existed. And why? Because there was a blight over the land which sanctioned by law the relation of proprietor and slave. We do not repent of the sacrifices we made, of the magnificent resolution we evinced in the face of Europe to extinguish the system of slavery. We see indeed that there are slaveowners that prosper in the world, and are in the possession of great riches; but we do not say, "It is in vain that we have cleansed our hearts and washed our hands from the stain of this abomination." What position might we have been in at this moment if we had not taken timely precautions for the extirpation of this crying evil? Under no circumstances, at no time, can that country be secure in which this condition of slavery is permitted to continue. I trust that those Governments that are still encouraging the slave trade, and, notwithstanding their hypocritical pretences, defying every effort we make to put an end to this accursed traffic, will be wise in time, and ponder on the consequences that must ensue from an increasing slave population. Have no events occurred of late calculated to admonish them? There have been mighty convulsions in Europe. That man would have been thought a madman who six months since ventured to predict the consequences of the events at Paris. That man who had said six months ago that the contagious influence of events at Paris would involve Berlin and Vienna in anarchy and confusion, would have been thought a mad speculator on the future. The mighty heavings of those convulsions are already felt on the other side of the Atlantic. Look at what is passing in the colonies of France. There are on every side useful lessons, by which the Governments of Brazil, of Cuba, and of the United States, would do well to take timely warning, to foresee that that which has happened in Europe must precipitate the time when there shall be a final extinction of slavery and the slave trade. I hope that the abolition of both will be effected by timely wisdom on the part of the Governments which now tolerate them. If it be not so effected—if by wise and provident legislation they do not speedily efface those great blots on Christianity—still they cannot long endure. The slave is destined to recover his freedom. Let me borrow, to express my own convictions, the magnificent language of Curran—worthy of the aspirations which he breathed for the freedom of the slave:—

> "No matter in what language his doom may have been pronounced—no matter in what disastrous struggle his liberties may have been cloven down—no matter what complexion incompatible with freedom an Indian or African sun may have burnt upon his brow—the time is fast approaching when his soul shall walk abroad in all her native majesty, when his body shall swell beyond the measure of the chains which burst around him, and he shall stand redeemed, regenerate, and disenthralled by the irresistible genius of universal emancipation."

MR. URQUHART, at the present stage of the debate, would only make a few observations on a subject respecting which every hon. Gentleman would be expected to give an account to his constituents. He would, therefore, merely state in a word why he could not give his support to the proposition of Her Majesty's Government. Although he was no advocate of protection, yet he did in his conscience believe that this was a case in which the protective principle should operate. He believed that the only effectual method of restoring prosperity to our colonies was to reduce the duty on our colonial, and increase that on foreign sugars. Unless that were done promptly, a vast portion of the human race on whose amelioration Great Britain had expended so much thought, labour, and treasure, would rapidly fall back into a state of primitive barbarism.

The MARQUESS of GRANBY was met by shouts for a division. He said he apologised for venturing to address the House at so late an hour. In his defence he could merely state that he had risen to endeavour to catch the Speaker's eye every time an opportunity afforded itself from the commencement of this debate—that he had endeavoured, on the last night of this debate to move the adjournment, but he was unsuccessful. He therefore hoped the House would allow him to make a few observations. He would not go, or attempt to go, into the details of this question. Every Member who had spoken upon it had admitted fully and entirely the existence of great depression in our West Indian colonies; and the only question that had been raised was the character of the remedy proposed for that distress. It had been stated that absenteeism, and negligence, and want of energy, might be among the main causes of that distress. But his right hon. Friend the Member for the University of Cambridge had so fully answered those allegations, that he (the Marquess of Granby) would make no observations upon them. But there had been another cause assigned for that distress, namely, the commercial depression which had recently befallen the empire generally. He had no hesitation in saying that the distress of the West Indies was attributable to the derangements caused by the Act of 1846. He wished to know how it happened that whilst the price of our West Indian sugar had fallen 13*s.* or 14*s.* per cwt., the produce of Cuba or the Brazils had not fallen to the same extent? Mr. Higgins was asked by Mr. Milner Gibson—

> "Perhaps some part of it (the reduction in price) is to be attributed to the monetary crisis?"

But Mr. Higgins answered—

> "Were it so, that would have affected the estates in Cuba as much as it has done ours; but such does not appear to be the case. The acts of the Legislature affected the price of our sugar much more than they had that of slave countries."

The distress was to be attributed, not to the commercial pressure, but to the difference between eighteen hours' labour and four or five hours' labour. The difference between the labour of the comparatively idle negro, and labour stimulated by the cutlass, the lash, and the bloodhounds of the slaveowner. In one word, the distress was owing to the unwholesome competition brought into play by the Act of 1846. It had been said that one of the remedies to be sought should be the diminution of the wages of labour; and that protection was not what was required, for protection, on the contrary, would raise the rate of wages by increasing prices. But on this point there had been a signal difference between two great authorities. The right hon. Baronet (Sir J. Graham) stated the other night that, in his opinion, high prices signified, not high wages, but low wages. The hon. Member for Westbury (Mr. J. Wilson), on the other hand, proposed his eighth resolution—

> "That if the protective duties levied upon foreign sugar were now to be increased, and the price of sugar in the British market were in consequence to be artificially raised, the efforts now being made by the British planter to lessen the cost of his sugar by a reduction of wages and other means of economy, would be impeded, wages would again be raised in the colonies, and the cost of production increased."

He (the Marquess of Granby) agreed with that opinion, that protection would raise the rate of wages. The wages of labour were high in the West Indies; but if the West India proprietor were reduced to beggary and ruin, what consolation would it be that his ruin was caused by the high rate of wages, which had been brought about by our legislation? But high wages was not the only difficult part of the question: there was still the other great difficulty of procuring men to work for our colonists at the time of the harvest. He (the Marquess of Granby) believed that the only true relief which they could give to the West Indian colonies was to give them full and ample protection, at the same time accompanying that protection with such means of immigration as should prevent any great increase in the wages of labour. He was afraid that this plan of the Government would be found to be of very little avail to the colonies. As the needle invariably pointed to the pole, except when influenced by some adjacent attracting metal, so he believed the desire of the noble Lord at the head of the Government had been to give adequate protection to our colonies, had he not been influenced by certain theories about competition and "buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market." His right hon. Friend the Member for Ripon (Sir J. Graham) admitted the other night that the difference between the cost of producing slave-labour and free-labour sugar was 15*s.* 9*d.*; and he asked of what avail would a protecting duty of 10*s*. be against so great a difference in the cost of production? He (the Marquess of Granby) wished to ask that right hon. Baronet, how, if he thought 10*s*. insufficient protection, he could (as he said he would) vote for the proposition of Her Majesty's Government? Surely if 10*s*. were insufficient protection, *à fortiori* 7*s*. must be too little. But the right hon. Baronet had fairly confessed that he should vote for the proposition of the Government, and against the Amendment, because the latter would lead to reaction with regard to the principles of free trade. So that it would appear that on so great a question as the safety of our colonial empire, the right hon. Baronet confessed that he would allow himself to be influenced by party motives. But he begged the free-traders on the opposite benches not to be swayed by such unworthy motives, but rather to follow the dictates of truth, impartiality and justice. He begged them not to be misled by the right hon. Baronet. He begged them to consider this question solely upon its merits. Before he sat down he would entreat the House to remember the position in which they now stood. He would entreat them to remember that in the year 1834, when the interests of our colonies and the interests of humanity were antagonistic, they did not hesitate to say that they would peril the colonies rather than suffer slavery to exist. But what would be thought of them if, when the interests of the two were identical—when the colonists and the friends of humanity united in entreating them to grant a sufficiently protective duty—when they remembered that this slavery that they now asked to put down was infinitely severer, infinitely more horrible, and infinitely more disgusting than colonial slavery—what would the world think of them if, under such circumstances, they refused to give that protection to the colonies which justice, humanity, and sound policy loudly demanded?

Lord J. RUSSELL: Sir, this House has a great question before it, worthy of all its attention. This House has to consider whether, viewing the peculiar state of the West India colonies, and the distress which has prevailed and does prevail in those colonies, it will go into Committee to consider whether it will make any alteration in the duties imposed by the Act of 1846. I avow, Sir, that after hearing this very protracted debate, I feel confident in the opinion I gave before—that, by interposing the Motion of the hon. Baronet, which we are now discussing, before you are allowed to leave the chair, instead of helping and aiding us in coming to a right decision on this question, the hon. Member has placed embarrassment and delay in our way, without any addition to the means of arriving at a correct solution of the difficulties before us. If the hon. Member had declared that there could be no settlement of this question, and no mode of giving relief to the West Indies, but a resolution which should be founded on the report of the Committee, I could well understand that if the House agreed to that resolution, then we should be in the road towards a settlement of the question, useful or injurious as it might in its nature be, but still useful as a settlement of the question before us. But the hon. Gentleman has moved a resolution which merely goes to an unsettlement of the question. If the hon. Baronet, as the organ of a great party, had made this Motion as a party Motion, with a view to a change of Government, I could well understand his object; but it has been clearly shown, in ths course of this debate, that while many hon. Gentlemen are going to vote with the hon. Baronet, they differ from him entirely with respect to the remedy he would propose. What, then, supposing the hon. Baronet carries his resolution, will be the effect of his suggestion? It is very true that he will reject the proposition of the Government; but I utterly deny that he will advance a step towards any settlement which will give relief to the West Indies. The hon. Baronet, if his proposition were carried, might then move that the House should go into Committee; but as soon as he proposed his 10*s*. duty for six years, he would find that not only those who opposed his former resolution, but the right hon. Member for the University of Oxford (Mr. Gladstone), and, as far as I understand, the right hon. Member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Goulburn), and other hon. Gentlemen, would declare that they thought this 10*s*. protection was more than the House ought to consent to; and one of the right hon. Gentlemen to whom I have referred would say that a reduction at once from 14*s*. to 10*s*. would be dangerous to the revenue. How, then, if the House should adopt the proposition of the hon. Baronet, would they have contributed towards the settlement of this question? They would have negatived the proposition of the Government; but they might adopt the proposition of the right hon. Member for the University of Oxford; and, I would ask, is that a better proposition for the West India body than the measure of the Government? This subject, at all events, ought to be considered in Committee; it is worthy of serious and deliberate consideration. It really seems to me that, if the hon. Baronet is successful in carrying his resolution, he will arrive at this result—that no proposition for an alteration of the duties of 1846 will meet the favour of a majority of the Committee, and that the hon. Baronet will end his measure for the relief of the West Indies by the continuance of that Act of 1846 to which he attributes the present distress of the colonies. Now, I ask the hon. Baronet, is this a course which it becomes him to take with a view to the relief of the West India colonies? I will avail myself of the opportunity afforded by the hon. Baronet's Motion to make some further statements with respect to the view which I take of the proposition that has been made by Her Majesty's Government, and of the reasons which have rendered that proposition necessary. The great changes that have taken place with regard to our West India colonies—the total emancipation of those who were formerly slaves—the admission, first, of free-labour sugar, and afterwards of all foreign sugar, into this country, have together made an immense change in the state of society in the West Indies. These changes—the first of them especially—rendered other measures necessary. Such measures have been carried into effect with great delay and with great obstruction, though perhaps with no more delay or obstruction than was necessary, but which have prevented the West India proprietors from being now in so advantageous a situation as they would have been in could Parliament and the Government, in 1834 or 1835, have fixed at once upon all the measures with which it was necessary to accompany the Act of Emancipation. To allude first to the measures with regard to vagrancy and squatting, upon which some remarks have been made, I would state, that having been at one time Secretary of State for the Colonies, I did not find that there was any material objection to be made to the laws which were proposed on these subjects in the different colonies; but I did find that there were great difficulties as to details, and that many of the provisions proposed infringed upon the liberty of the enfranchised negroes. There was also, at that time, a most jealous supervision of all colonial legislation on the part of the Anti-Slavery Committee, and the antislavery body. Their jealousy was, perhaps, carried to an undue extent. It may have been that many of the provisions of the laws to which they objected were only slightly in fault; but, from the very recent emancipation of the slaves, such a jealousy in this country was, I think, natural. It was only the result of the long struggle which had been carried on between those who wished to maintain the institution of slavery, and the great popular body in this country which had been urging its removal and striving for its total abolition. But be that as it may, no doubt the contest with respect to these laws tended to prevent the free course of legislation, and the speedy enactment of beneficial measures with respect to vagrancy and the employment of labour. There were likewise at that time what I think the West India proprietors had some right to object to—continual reports from stipendiary magistrates stating the conduct pursued by each proprietor towards the labourers on his estate, and thus conveying to this country statements which gave rise to angry contests. At the time I was Secretary of State I thought it my duty to desire that such reports should be more rarely made. I only refer to these subjects now to show that such a great measure as the Act of Emancipation could not be carried fully into effect without many subsequent provisions—without many alterations of the laws existing in the colonies; laws suited to a state of slavery, and of course unfitted to the state of freedom which was subsequently established. Sir, another and more important question came under consideration at the same time. I think I may say that, with regard to advantages of soil and climate, some of our West India colonies are equal either to Cuba or the other slave colonies; and I believe that the advantage of the capital of this great country, if, as has been said, it be poured out like water upon our West Indian colonies, fully compensates for any advantage which Cuba may derive from her resident proprietors. But what our colonies immediately suffered from was the want of continuous labour. The question was, how this want of continuous labour should be supplied. Great objection was felt to deriving that labour from Africa. It was thought that, if labour was derived from

Africa in any shape, it would tend to a renewal of the slave trade. When I held the seals of the Colonial Office, I proposed to do away with this restriction; but, although my proposal was acceded to, the immediate result was almost insignificant. There were very few who were disposed to take advantage of our change in legislation. Other plans had been tried. European colonists had been sent out, but European immigration had, to a great extent, failed. Coolie immigration had been tried, and that had likewise to a considerable degree failed; so that attempts and experiments were made in order to supply this want of labour. I think, Sir, it is desirable that we should adopt some means for enabling the colonists to increase the number of their labourers, and that such a measure might be exceedingly beneficial. I should say that it would not be beneficial only in proportion to the number of immigrants introduced, for it is the testimony of many persons connected with the West Indies, that a very small addition to the number of labourers often greatly increases the willingness of the people to work. It is not, therefore, by the number of immigrants introduced, or by the cost of their introduction, that we are to measure the effect of such a step. The right hon. Member for Tamworth (Sir R. Peel), in referring to the proposal of the Government to advance 500,000*l.* as a loan to the colonists for the promotion of immigration, has asked whether a portion of that sum might not be appropriated to other purposes. Now, I must state that the Government have been very unwilling to make such an appropriation of any part of that sum as might lead them into engagements for loans with individual proprietors in the West Indies; for they considered that, difficult as it is in Great Britain and Ireland to make such conditions with respect to the improvement of land as to enable the Government to carry on such operations beneficially, it would be almost impossible to do so when they had to deal with individual proprietors in a number of distant colonies. But as we advanced money to Canada for the purpose of public works there, giving to it our guarantee for a considerable loan, so I should say with respect to any works in the West Indies of some considerable extent, such as those to which the right hon. Gentleman has alluded, namely, tramways, or some great works such as might prevent those droughts to which the islands are subject, that they would constitute a legitimate object for the employment of some of the money we propose to appropriate, and I should have no objection to extend the appropriation to those purposes. I now come to that question on which the greater portion of the debate has turned—namely, the differential or protective duty. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University attributes the whole of the present distress of the planters to the Bill of 1846. Now, it does not appear to me that that Bill has been the principal cause, even though it might be one of the causes of that distress. Some part of the House will recollect that in stating the probably immediate effect of that Bill, I said, there would in all likelihood be some 240,000 tons of sugar introduced in this country from the British possessions, about 20,000 tons of foreign free-labour sugar, and 20,000 tons of slave-labour sugar, making altogether 280,000 tons. I did not expect that the produce of our own possessions would very greatly increase; but it does happen that the produce of the last year reached to upwards of 280,000 tons; and that quantity, together with 480,000 tons of foreign sugar, has caused a great depreciation of price. The amount of the West India produce alone, according to the return moved for by the hon. Member for Leicester, has—after having been for several separate years, 2,000,000 cwt., 2,2000,000 cwt., 2,100,000 cwt., 2,500,000 cwt. 2,400,000 cwt., 2,800,000 cwt., 2,152,000 cwt.,—risen in the last year to 3,202,775 cwt. That is an enormous increase in the production of the West Indies. The right hon. Gentleman said most truly that that increased production was in no way to be attributed to the Act of 1846, inasmuch as the canes had been previously planted; but nevertheless it is evident that there has been an immense increase of production; and if that increase had been concomitant with the high prices that formerly prevailed under the system of monopoly, I believe that, with the effect of strict monopoly, it would have produced as great distress as at present—distress similar to that which we have seen in former times of monopoly. In addition, however, to this increased quantity of West India produce, 48,000 tons of foreign sugar have at the same time come into the market, and the two together have caused the great cheapness of sugar, and thereby caused the distress. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge says he cannot consent to a 10*s.* protection, though he does not agree to the plan of the Government. I must therefore suppose that he is for some intermediate scheme—for some protection between 7*s.* which we propose, and 10*s.* which the Committee propose. I own it does seem to me that the disagreement which the right hon. Gentleman has with the Government on this point is rather a matter for consideration in Committee. It is a difference of some 2*s.* or so at the utmost; and such being the case I am surprised that the right hon. Gentleman does not consent to go into Committee to consider the question. Another Gentleman who has spoken to-night, and whose opinions are entitled to the utmost respect (Mr. Barkly), says that in his view there ought to be a protection of 10*s.* for three years. Again, I think that is a question for consideration in the Committee; but I should very much doubt whether that 10*s.* protective duty for three years would not produce the very effect which he deprecates, namely, that of raising the wages of labour. I am not able to understand that part of his argument where he says that if a 10*s.* protective duty were established for ten years, it would cause a fresh struggle between the planters and the labourers, and that the labourers would gain the advantage, but that if it were only established for two years, or, as he now says, for three years, then the planter would gain the advantage. The labourers would know that such a change was made, and they would demand increased wages, just as much if the change were made for one or two years as if it were made for six years. They would say, whatever may be the case the year after next, while this increased protection lasts, and while the planters are enabled to make a greater profit, let us have the advantage. It seems to me impossible to admit the proposition, that if a 10*s.* protective duty for six years would produce an immediate and large rise of wages, such a duty for two or three years would produce no effect of the kind. Thus the objection urged by the hon. Gentleman to the scheme of the Committee appears to me to apply equally to his own, namely, that it would tend immediately to raise wages very high, and produce a fresh struggle between the planters and the labourers; and at the end of the two or three years you would find the same state of distress as now. In the midst of these various schemes and suggestions, the Government have proposed that which seems to me to combine advantages which it was their duty to combine. I do not think that it would have been right to have remained, quiescent in the presence of the very great distress existing, without making some effort in order to relieve it, bringing at the same time the Act of 1846 into further operation. What we propose, therefore, is to give an immediate advantage to the planter in an increased protection for some time, and to give an advantage also to the consumer in a diminished duty. We propose that instead of 4*s.* 6*d.* the West India planter should have for certain qualities of sugar a protection of 7*s.*, making a difference of 2*s.* 6*d.* beyond the Act of 1846. So far, there is a great advantage to the West Indian body in our proposition over that made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxford University, his proposition being the continuance of 6*s.* protection, and that for some years. Our proposition, while it will give a certain degree of increased protection, at the same time involves a diminution of duty, and thereby tends greatly to increase the consumption. I own it appears to me that, seeing the great increase of the production of the West Indies, and also in the foreign colonies and countries, the only chance which the planters in our colonies have, consists in greatly increased consumption. The way to produce that increased consumption is by a diminution of duty; our plan proposes that, and that of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxford University does not. It is quite true that the plan of the Committee proposes the same advantage in that respect; but it involves, if carried to its utmost extent, such a sacrifice of revenue as the House would hardly consent to. I will not go into the particulars of the increased consumption on which we reckon to make good the amount of revenue in the present year. When we go into Committee some Member of the Government will state the reasons why we think that there will not ensue a greater diminution of duty than 30,000*l.* or 40,000*l.*, or, as I should think, not more than 10,000*l.* There now remains to notice the objection of the hon. Baronet the Member for Oxford University, who considers this plan as an encouragement of slavery. Now, if this were entirely a new question—if no slave-grown sugar could be admitted at present—I would admit that that was a fair ground of objection; but the proposition with which he has to deal is not one of admitting for the first time slave-grown sugar, but of giving increased protection for the present against slave-grown sugar, and in favour of our own colonies. If the hon. Baronet were to say he would repeal altogether the Act of 1846, and totally prohibit the admission of slave-grown sugar, then I could admit his argument against the present plan; but I believe the hon. Baronet must be convinced that that would be a vain and fruitless effort. If the hon. Baronet were to succeed in such an attempt, or if the plan of giving a 10*s*. protective duty were to succeed, I think you would see in a year or two a fresh struggle to take it away again. The price of sugar would be complained of, and the amount of difference between the price now and what it would be then would be stated as a tax on the consumer, and fresh efforts would be made to take away the protection; and the West India body would be placed in that most difficult of all positions—that of doubt from year to year, and almost from month to month, as to whether or not they could maintain the protection. That is the danger I see—a danger pointed out by a gentleman of great practical experience in West India affairs—who was one of the witnesses examined before the Committee. My belief is, that Parliament have adopted a sound principle when they have said, in the first place, that they will not permit slavery to exist in any of the British possessions; and when they have said, in the second place, that they would not ultimately consider the institution of slavery as a bar against the admission into this country of goods which are the produce of slave labour. I do not see in this respect that inconsistency in our legislation on which some hon. Gentlemen have commented. The inconsistency, I think, would be far greater if we were to consent to the admission of all other articles the produce of slave labour, and, making a distinction in the case of sugar alone, refuse to admit it. My belief is, that these distinctions in tariffs do not form the mode by which you can attain so great an object as the abolition of the slave trade throughout the world. I think rather, if you rely upon the progress of opinion—if you rely upon the impatience that will be felt among those who are retained in slavery in Cuba, while in Jamaica and Martinique, and all the other islands around them, freedom prevails, you will rely upon a much better basis than any distinction we can make in tariffs for the protection of the West Indies. I own I expect, setting aside the progress of slavery in the United States of America —a problem to which I see no safe or satisfactory solution—that if slavery in Cuba and Brazil is to be abolished, it will be abolished all the sooner if we do not make it a matter of tariff and regulation—if we say we have abolished slavery ourselves; we are free from any stain of that kind; we don't inquire into the institutions of foreign countries; we wish for freedom to prevail, but we trust to the strength of the cause, and leave it to other countries to decide for themselves the manner of effecting it.

MR. MUNTZ wished to be allowed to say a few words in explanation of the vote he intended to give; for he had voted with Her Majesty's Government on the Bill of 1846, and he was now about to vote against them. He had voted for the Bill of 1846 because he considered it was a settlement of the question. He voted for it on the principle of freetrade also, because it was alleged that if it were not so settled it would be impossible to effect an arrangement with Brazil. He would not, therefore, vote for the disturbance of the settlement until the freet-rade question were proved to be either right or wrong. But the present was not a question of whether free trade was right or wrong, or whether they were to have slavery or to give up their colonies. Her Majesty's Government proposed a question which arranged nothing. It was a measure which attacked everything and settled nothing. It despoiled the revenue, and it did not improve the condition of the planter. It was opposed to the principles of free trade, and it did not give protection. At the end of six years, the planter would be just as forward as he was now. It was a mere question of whether they would kill him at once or bleed him to death. Now the Motion of the hon. Member for Droitwich would put an end to the question proposed by Her Majesty's Government; and for that reason, and that reason alone, he would vote for it. But he would not be obliged on that account to vote with him on any other measure he might subsequently propose, either for a 10*s*. duty, or any other proposition he might make. As to the labour question, it was not quantity of labour, but quality, which they wanted in the West Indies. He knew that the labour they wanted was that which should be under control. But the measure of Her Majesty's Government would not provide that. It was a futile, petty, trivial measure, and so different from the Bill of 1846, that he felt bound to vote against it.

MR. ANSTEY said, that he had frequently attempted to catch the Speaker's eye during earlier periods of the debate, and if he were to be prevented from a hearing then, he should move the adjournment. He was not to be prevented by any step which the Prime Minister might have taken to secure the debate coming to a conclusion. He agreed with the hon. Member for Birmingham, that the present was not a question of free-trade or protection. It was a question of justice, and he wished to deliver his opinions upon it, for with every Irish Member in the House he stood in a peculiar position. The Irish Members were under the imputation of having entertained an offer, a degrading offer, which had been made to them on the part of the Government by some agent—he would not say how commissioned or how far authorised—but by some agent, to the effect, that if they would assist the Government in destroying the liberties and properties of their West Indian fellow-subjects, they (the Irish Members) would not be held too firmly bound to the terms of the proposition before the House. But he begged to say, that whatever the terms might be which Her Majesty's Government might think fit to offer, they would not turn him from his purpose; and that he had not read the constitution so as to suppose that justice to Ireland was to be brought about by injustice to the West Indies. On the part of his constituents he would not accept of any such compromise. There were other modes of doing justice to Ireland; and he, for one, would not be a party, on behalf of his constituents, to any arrangement to purchase that justice at the price of injustice to the West Indies. It was vain to say that this was a question of free trade. It was no such question. Its real author had not so propounded it. It was a measure for the destruction of our great colonial empire. That was the avowed purpose for which its real author, and the school of which he was the chief, had first brought it forward more than ten years ago. [*Ironical cheers.*] Let those who cheered wait for the answer of the hon. Member for the West Riding (Mr. Cobden) to the question he was going to put to him. He would ask that hon. Member whether he denied the authorship of the pamphlet which he held in his hand, and which had been attributed to the hon. Member by the voice of fame? It was entitled *England, Ireland, and America, by a Manchester Manufacturer*. If he admitted the authorship, he stood committed to the proposition that our colonies were an incumbrance to us, and that it was desirable to get rid of them by means of an equalisation of duties. It stated that America revolted, and hostile America was our best customer, and therefore, the more we strengthen America by colonial annexations and weaken this empire, the better it would be for the free-trade school of Manchester. Hon. Members on that (the Opposition) side of the House had pointed out the inevitable results of these measures, but they had been long ago foreseen by the hon. Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire. In the pamphlet to which he had referred, the writer said—

> "We are on the verge of an inevitable combination of commercial necessities that will altogether change the relations in which we have hitherto stood with our colonies. The new world is destined to become the arbiter of the commercial policy of the old."

The writer expressed his regret that a monstrous delay was granted to our West Indian colonies of ten years, and said—

> "At the end of this period, if not long before, the monstrous impolicy of sacrificing our trade with a new trade of almost boundless extent of rich territory in favour of a few small exhausted islands, will cease to be sanctioned by law."

He went on to say—

> "that the markets of the West Indies must be placed in the same predicament as if they were not part of Her Majesty's dominions; and where would be the semblance of a plea for putting ourselves to the expense of governing and defending them?"

But the hon. Member did not stop there, for the measures by which he proposed to sap the allegiance of these few small and contemptible islands he proposed to extend to our great and mighty possessions in Eastern India. He then came to the hon. Member's favourite subject of the diminution of expenditure, by the prostration of all our military and naval resources, in the presence of the superior power of our enemies, and the hon. Member said—

> "When the sugar and cotton duties are equalised—when the East and West Indies are lost—we shall be able to reduce the charge of the Navy and Ordnance, amounting to 14,000,000*l.* annually—"

and he concluded by saying "there will be an end"— [*Considerable interruption.*] The hon. Member concluded by moving the adjournment of the House.

Mr. FORBES seconded the Motion.

Colonel DUNNE, in reference to what had fallen from the hon. Member for Youghal, denied that any compromise had been entered into at the interview of the deputation of Irish Members with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which took place some days since.

Lord J. RUSSELL observed, that the hon. and learned Member opposite had been heard through most of the observations he addressed to the House; and he hoped, at that late hour of the night, he would allow the debate to be brought to a conclusion.

Mr. ANSTEY did not know what the noble Lord would have. He had been so much interrupted, that he found a difficulty in commencing or concluding a single sentence. He had borne the interruptions to which he had been subjected with great patience; and if the noble Lord was not satisfied with those interruptions he did not know what he would be contented with. His hon. and gallant Friend had understood him; he had not made any charge. He had simply said that he, as an Irish Member, lay under the imputation that such an offer had been made, and therefore that he felt it incumbent on him to repudiate it. A Member of the deputation communicated to the other Irish Members information which left a different impression upon his mind from the statement they had just heard. ["Name!"] There was no occasion for him to name; the hon. Member was present, and could speak for himself. He (Mr. Anstey) had not been present at that conference; but he had heard a somewhat different account of it from another Member of the deputation, who said, on returning, "Let us leave it entirely to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He is in our favour, and he will impress our case favourably on his Colleagues, but do not mention it in the House, lest the West Indian Gentlemen should find out what is in reserve for them."

Motion for Adjournment withdrawn.

Mr. ANSTEY continued to say that the avowed object of the hon. Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire, and of the chief supporters of the present measure, were those set forth in the passages he had read. That party were of opinion that the monstrous impolicy of sacrificing our trade with the American Continent, in favour of a few small islands of exhausted soil would soon be generally recognised; that we must cease to trade with them exclusively, and then no semblance of a plea would be left for putting ourselves to the expense of governing and defending them; that the Canadian monopoly must yield to the claims of the United States and the Baltic trade; that the same system must be extended to our Eastern possessions; and that when the colonies and India were lost we should be enabled to reduce the charge for our Army, Navy, and Ordnance, amounting to 14,000,000*l.* annually. And the hon. Member (Mr. Cobden) had concluded with expressing his hope that there might be an end to that favourite Spanish proverb so often quoted — that the sun never set on the King of England's dominions. He would ask the House to consider whether it was not fitting that they should pause before giving their sanction to a measure introduced by the Government under the auspices of that hon. Member? The hon. Member had announced it to be a measure for the separation of the colonies from the mother country. He was the authority to which Her Majesty's free-trade Ministers must bow. Were they prepared to act upon that policy? Were Ministers prepared to see our West Indian colonies annexed to the United States of America? If not, why did they adopt the measure of the hon. Member for the West Riding, and court his support? On this point, the hon. Member and his party were in entire accord with us. The measure would undoubtedly have the results foreseen by the hon. Member. Of what practical value would it be to these colonies to be able to refer to their long traditional connexion with this country, if, when they asked for justice, not merely was protection denied them, but old oppressions were continued, and new ones imposed? It should be recollected that the cultivation of sugar had been originally forced upon the West Indian colonies. It was once a great Parliamentary policy to create in favour of Great Britain the monopoly of sugar, which at the beginning of the last century was enjoyed by Portugal. In spite of West Indian remonstrance, that monopoly was created at the sacrifice of the great West Indian staple products—cotton, coffee, and indigo. Heavy and discouraging duties were laid on these—bounties were offered on sugar—slavery, that raw material of sugar, was largely imported into the West Indies by command of Parliament—and the end was accomplished. The cotton and coffee fields were thrown out of cultivation; the indigo trade was utterly destroyed; the sugar trade became ascendant; and the slave trade, in spite of the honourable opposition of the West Indies themselves, became universal and permanent. He held in his hand a list of no less than seventeen Acts of Parliament, passed between the reigns of William III. and George IV. inclusive, for the encouragement of the slave trade, slavery and sugar plantation in the West Indies. Every Act of the West Indian Assemblies passed for the suppression or discouragement of the slave trade had been successively disallowed at home; and at length, soon after the accession of George III., the governors of those colonies were informed, that if they presumed to give even a temporary assent to such enactments, they should be suspended from office. It was, therefore, too late for the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth to expatiate on the evils of Parliamentary legislation in matters of agriculture and commerce. That objection applied to the Acts of 1846, 1833, 1807, and the long succession of years from the reign of William III. They had, for a period of 150 years, made these colonies the victims of a wayward and capricious legislation; and now hon. Gentlemen opposite sought to stifle discussion, and to seal the ruin of a great and mighty interest. This was no case of the colonies asking the mother country to remove natural obstructions or difficulties of the colonists' own raising—they only asked them to remove the necessary effects of their own legislation—the colonies did not beg, they did not seek for recompense. What they sought was restitution. If the West Indians had had no legislation of the mother country they would not now appear in the attitude of suitors for assistance and support. He opposed the proposal of the Government, because he thought it would consummate a great crime, and because it took from our West India colonists the last chance of restitution, and sealed the fate of that unfortunate dependency of the British Crown. They talked about their hatred of slavery, and of the great sacrifices which this country had made; but it was time for them to cease this vaunting unless they were prepared, not merely to make the purchase, but to pay the price. He despised that vicarious benevolence which would indulge itself at another's cost. If hon. Members were willing to give a fair trial to the great measure of 1834, they should abdicate free trade; if they stood by free trade they should abdicate humanity. The two were inconsistent, and hon. Members should adopt either one or the other. At this moment they were, he would tell them, free-traders as they called themselves, protecting slave-grown sugar, and discouraging colonial sugar, the produce of free industry. Was the price of the latter the natural price or not? If it was, then they were untrue to their own principles in giving a bounty to the foreign sugars whose cheapness was produced by disturbing causes. If it was not, they were still untrue to their principles in prohibiting to our own colonists the use of that raw material of cheap sugar—the slave trade. Let them make their option. Let them give up cheap sugar or let them abdicate their humanity. How ludicrously inconsistent was their position! They protected foreign free-grown sugar—they encouraged slave-grown sugar—and they refused protection to their own colonies. And then they gave protection—after a fashion—to our colonial sugar too; for they who would not vote for the adequate protection of a differential duty, were yet contented to go on wasting nearly a million every year in the ineffectual blockade of the coasts of Africa. Surely if their motives were single and pure, their policy was unintelligible and absurd. But if the views of the real author of their measures were still the same now as in 1836, and if the principles of the hon. Member for the West Riding were predominant in the Cabinet, then, indeed, the whole of their proceedings would be more comprehensible. In the name of humanity, of consistency, and of justice, in the name of free trade itself—in the name and for the interests of that great and mighty empire, which those hon. Members were seeking to dismember and destroy—he had raised his feeble voice that night against the measure of the Government; and he was determined also to give his vote against it in all its future stages.

The House divided on the question that the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question:—Ayes 260; Noes 245: Majority 15.

List of the Ayes.

Abdy, T. N.
Adair, H. E.
Adair, R. A. S.
Aglionby, H. A.
Alcock, T.
Anderson, A.
Anson, hon. Col.
Anson, Visct.
Armstrong, Sir A.
Arundel and Surrey, Earl of
Bagshaw, J.
Baines, M. T.
Baring, H. B.
Baring, rt. hon. Sir F.
Barnard, E. G.
Bellew, R. M.
Berkeley, hon. Capt
Berkeley, hon. H. F.
Bernal, R.
Blake, M. J.
Bolling, W.
Bouverie, hon. E. P.
Bowring, Dr.
Boyd, J.
Boyle, hon. Col.
Brand, T.
Brocklehurst, J.
Brotherton, J.
Brown, W.
Buller, C.
Butler, P. S.
Callaghan, D.
Campbell, hon. W. F.
Carter, J. B.
Caulfeild, J. M.
Cavendish, hon. C. C.
Cavendish, hon. G. H.
Cavendish, W. G.
Childers, J. W.
Cholmeley, Sir M.
Clay, J.
Clay, Sir W.
Clements, hon. C. S.
Cobden, R.
Cockburn, A. J. E.
Coke, hon. E. K.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Collins, W.
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Craig, W. G.
Cubitt, W.
Currie, R.
Dalrymple, Capt.

Dashwood, G. H.
Davie, Sir H. R. F.
Dawson, hon. T. V.
Denison, W. J.
Denison, J. E.
Divett, E.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Douro, Marq. of
Duff, G. S.
Duke, Sir J.
Duncan, Visct.
Duncan, G.
Duncuft, J.
Dundas, Adm.
Dundas, Sir D.
Ebrington, Visct.
Ellice, E.
Elliot, hon. J. E.
Enfield, Visct.
Estcourt, J. B. B.
Evans, Sir De L.
Evans, J.
Evans, W.
Ewart, W.
Fergus, J.
Ferguson, Col.
Ferguson, Sir R. A.
FitzPatrick, rt. hn. J. W.
Fitzwilliam, hon. G. W.
Foley, J. H. H.
Fordyce, A. D.
Forster, M.
Fortescue, C.
Fortescue, hon. J. W.
Fox, W. J.
Freestun, Col.
French, F.
Frewen, C. H.
Gibson, rt. hon. T. M.
Glyn, G. C.
Grace, O. D. J.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Grenfell, C. P.
Grenfell, C. W.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Grey, R. W.
Grosvenor, Lord R.
Guest, Sir J.
Hall, Sir B.
Hallyburton, Ld. J. F. G.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Harcourt, G. G.
Hardcastle, J. A.
Hastie, A.
Hastie, A.
Hawes, B.
Hay, Lord J.
Hayter, W. G.
Headlam, T. E.
Heathcoat, J.
Heathcote, G. J.
Heneage, G. H. W.
Heneage, E.
Henry, A.
Heywood, J.
Hindley, C.
Hobhouse, rt. hon. Sir J.
Hobhouse, T. B.
Hodges, T. L.
Hodges, T. T.
Hollond, R.
Howard, hon. C. W. G.
Howard, hon. E. G. G.
Howard, Sir R.
Hughes, W. B.
Humphery, Ald.
Jervis, Sir J.
Kershaw, J.
Kildare, Marq. of
King, hon. P. J. L.
Labouchere, rt. hon. H.
Lacy, H. C.
Langston, J. H.
Lascelles, hon. W. S.
Lemon, Sir C.
Lennard, T. B.
Lewis, rt. hon. Sir T. F.
Lewis, G. C.
Littleton, hon. E. R.
Loch, J.
Locke, J.
Mackinnon, W. A.
M'Cullagh, W. T.
M'Gregor, J.
M'Taggart, Sir J.
Maher, N. V.
Maitland, T.
Marshall, J. G.
Marshall, W.
Martin, J.
Martin, C. W.
Martin, S.
Matheson, A.
Matheson, J.
Matheson, Col.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Melgund, Visct.
Milner, W. M. E.
Milnes, R. M.
Milton, Visct.
Mitchell, T. A.
Molesworth, Sir W.
Morpeth, Visct.
Morison, Sir W.
Morris, D.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Mulgrave, Earl of
Noel, hon. G. J.
Norreys, Lord
Norreys, Sir D. J.
O'Brien, J.
O'Brien, T.
O'Connell, M. J.
Ogle, S. C. H.
Ord, W.
Owen, Sir J.
Paget, Lord A.
Paget, Lord C.
Paget, Lord G.
Palmer, R.
Palmerston, Visct.
Parker, J.
Pearson, C.
Pechell, Capt.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Perfect, R.
Peto, S. M.
Philips, Sir G. R.
Pigott, F.
Pilkington, J.
Price, Sir R.
Pugh, D.
Pusey, P.
Raphael, A.
Reynolds, J.
Ricardo, J. L.
Ricardo, O.
Rice, E. R.
Robartes, T. J. A.
Roche, E. B.
Romilly, Sir J.
Russell, Lord J.
Russell, hon. E. S.
Russell, F. C. H.
Rutherfurd, A.
Salwey, Col.
Scholefield, W.
Scrope, G. P.
Seymour, Sir H.
Seymour, Lord
Shafto, R. D.
Sheil, rt. hon. R. L.
Shelburne, Earl of
Sheridan, R. B.
Simeon, J.
Slaney, R. A.
Smith, rt. hon. R. V.
Smith, J. A.
Smith, J. B.
Somerville, rt. hn. Sir W.
Spearman, H. J.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Stanton, W. H.
Strickland, Sir G.
Stuart, Lord D.
Stuart, Lord J.
Talbot, C. R. M.
Talfourd, Serj.
Tancred, H. W.
Tennent, R. J.
Thicknesse, R. A.
Thompson, Col.
Thompson, G.
Thornely, T.
Tollemache, hon. F. J.
Towneley, J.
Townley, R. G.
Townshend, Capt.
Traill, G.
Trelawny, J. S.
Turner, E.
Vane, Lord H.
Verney, Sir H.
Villiers, hon. C.
Vivian, J. H.
Wall, C. B.
Ward, H. G.
Watkins, Col.
Westhead, J. P.
Willcox, B. M.
Williams, J.
Wilson, J.
Wilson, M.
Wood, rt. hon. Sir C.
Wrightson, W. B.
Wyld, J.
Young, Sir J.

TELLERS.
Hill, Lord M.
Tufnell, H.

List of the NOES.

Acland, Sir T. D.
Adare, Visct.
Adderley, C. B.
Anstey, T. C.
Archdall, Capt.
Bagge, W.
Bagot, hon. W.
Bailey, J. jun.
Baillie, H. J.
Baldock, E. H.
Baldwin, C. B.
Bankes, G.
Barkly, H.
Baring, T.
Barrington, Visct.
Bateson, T.
Beckett, W.
Benbow, J.
Benett, J.
Bennet, P.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Bentinck, Lord H.
Beresford, W.
Berkeley, hon. G. F.
Birch, Sir T. B.
Blackall, S. W.
Bourke, R. S.
Bowles, Adm.
Bramston, T. W.
Bremridge, R.
Broadley, H.
Brooke, Lord
Bruce, Lord E.
Bruce, C. L. C.
Bruen, Col.
Buck, L. W.
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Bunbury, W. M.
Burghley, Lord
Burrell, Sir C. M.
Cabbell, B. B.
Cardwell, E.
Carew, W. H. P.
Charteris, hon. F.
Chichester, Lord J. L.
Christopher, R. A.
Christy, S.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.
Clive, hon. R. H.
Clive, H. B.
Cochrane, A. D. R. W. B.
Cocks, T. S.
Codrington, Sir W.
Cole, hon. H. A.
Coles, H. B.
Compton, H. C.
Conolly, Col.
Copeland, Ald.
Corry, rt. hon. H. L.
Cotton, hon. W. H. S.
Courtenay, Lord
Currie, H.
Damer, hon. Col.
Davies, D. A. S.
Devereux, J. T.
Disraeli, B.
Dod, J. W.
Dodd, G.
Drax, J. S. W. S. E.
Drumlanrig, Visct.
Drummond, H. H.
Duckworth, Sir J. T. B.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Dundas, G.
Dunne, F. P.
Du Pre, C. G.
East, Sir J. B.
Edwards, H.
Egerton, Sir P.
Egerton, W. T.
Emlyn, Visct.

Euston, Earl of
Fagan, W.
Farnham, E. B.
Farrer, J.
Fellowes, E.
Filmer, Sir E.
Fitzroy, hon. H.
Floyer, J.
Forbes, W.
Forester, hon. G. C. W.
Fox, S. W. L.
Fuller, A. E.
Galway, Visct.
Gaskell, J. M.
Gladstone, rt. hn. W. E.
Godson, R.
Gooch, E. S.
Gordon, Adm.
Gore, W. R. O.
Goring, C.
Goulburn, right hon. H.
Granby, Marq. of
Greene, J.
Greene, T.
Grogan, E.
Gwyn, H.
Haggitt, F. R.
Hale, R. B.
Halford, Sir H.
Hall, Col.
Halsey, T. P.
Hamilton, G. A.
Hamilton, J. H.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Harris, hon. Capt.
Hayes, Sir E.
Henley, J. W.
Herbert, rt. hon. S.
Herries, rt. hon. J. C.
Hervey, Lord A.
Hildyard, R. C.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hodgson, W. N.
Hood, Sir A.
Hope, H. T.
Hornby, J.
Hotham, Lord
Hudson, G.
Hume, J.
Ingestre, Visct.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Jocelyn, Visct.
Johnstone, Sir J.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Jones, Capt.
Keogh, W.
Knightley, Sir C.
Knox, Col.
Lascelles, hon. E.
Legh, G. C.
Lennox, Lord H. G.
Lincoln, Earl of
Lindsay, hon. Col.
Lockhart, A. E.
Lockhart, W.
Lowther, H.
Mackenzie, W. F.
Macnaghten, Sir E.
Mahon, Visct.
Mandeville, Visct.
Mangles, R. D.
Manners, Lord C. S.
Manners, Lord G.
March, Earl of
Masterman, J.
Maxwell, hon. J. P.
Meux, Sir H.
Miles, P. W. S.
Monsell, W.
Moore, G. H.
Morgan, O.
Mullings, J. R.
Muntz, G. F.
Mure, Col.
Napier, J.
Neeld, J.
Neeld, J.
Newdegate, C. N.
Newport, Visct.
Nugent, Lord
O'Brien, Sir L.
O'Connor, F.
Ossulston, Lord
Oswald, A.
Packe, C. W.
Palmer, R.
Pattison, J.
Peel, Col.
Pennant, hon. Col.
Pigot, Sir R.
Plowden, W. H. C.
Powell, Col.
Powlett, Lord W.
Reid, Col.
Rendlesham, Lord
Renton, J. C.
Repton, G. W. J.
Richards, R.
Robinson, G. R.
Rolleston, Col.
Rufford, F.
Rushout, Capt.
Sadlier, J.
Sandars, G.
Scott, hon. F.
Scully, F.
Seaham, Visct.
Seymer, H. K.
Shirley, E. J.
Sibthorp, Col.
Sidney, Ald.
Smyth, J. G.
Smythe, hon. G.
Smollett, A.
Somerset, Capt.
Somerton, Visct.
Sotheron, T. H. S.
Spooner, R.
Stafford, A.
Stuart, H.
Stuart, J.
Sturt, H. G.
Sullivan, M.
Sutton, J. H. M.
Taylor, T. E.
Thesiger, Sir F.
Thompson, Ald.
Thornhill, G.
Tollemache, J.
Trevor, hon. G. R.
Trollope, Sir J.
Turner, G. J.
Urquhart, D.
Verner, Sir W.
Vesey, hon. T.
Villiers, Visct.
Villiers, hon. F. W. C.
Vivian, J. E.
Vyse, R. H. R. H.
Waddington, D.
Waddington, H. S.
Walpole, S. H.
Walsh, Sir J. B.
Walter, J.
Wawn, J. T.
Welby, G. E.
Williams, T. P.
Williamson, Sir H.
Willoughby, Sir H.
Wodehouse, E.
Worcester, Marq. of
Wortley, rt. hon. J. S.
Wyvill, M.

TELLERS.

Buxton, Sir E. N.
Pakington, Sir J.

House in Committee.

The following Resolution was moved:—

"That, in lieu of the Duties of Customs now payable on Sugar or Molasses, the following Duties shall, from and to the respective days herein mentioned, be charged on Sugar and Molasses imported into the United Kingdom (that is to say),

"1. On Sugar or Molasses, the growth and produce of any British Possession into which the importation of Foreign Sugar is prohibited, being imported from any such Possession, the Duties following (that is to say),

ARTICLES.	From and after 5 July 1848 to 5 July 1849 inclusive.	From and after 5 July 1849 to 5 July 1850 inclusive.	From and after 5 July 1850 to 5 July 1851 inclusive.	From and after 5 July 1851
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Candy, Brown or White, double refined Sugar, or Sugar equal in quality to double refined, for every cwt.	0 19 6	0 18 0	0 16 6	0 15 0
Other refined Sugar, or Sugar rendered by any process equal in quality thereto, for every cwt.	0 17 4	0 16 0	0 14 8	0 13 4
White Clayed Sugar, or Sugar rendered by any process equal in quality to White Clayed, not being refined, for every cwt.	0 15 2	0 14 0	0 12 10	0 11 8
Muscovado, or any other Sugar not being equal in quality to White Clayed, for every cwt..	0 13 0	0 12 0	0 11 0	0 10 0
Molasses, for every cwt. . .	0 4 10	0 4 6	0 4 2	0 3 9

House resumed. Committee to sit again. House adjourned at Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, June 30, 1848.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—2ª Imprisonment for Debt (Ireland); Public Health.

Reported.—Commons Inclosure.

Received the Royal Assent.—Great Yarmouth Freemen Disfranchisement; Poor Houses (Ireland); Collectors of Cess (Ireland).

Petitions Presented. From Sanquhar, and several other Places, against the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on the Sabbath.—From Bristol, and a great Number of other Places, in favour of the Public Health Bill.—From Chichester, for the Adoption of Measures for the Suppression of Seduction and Prostitution.—From the Belfast Anti-Slavery Association, against the Intended System of Emigration of the Natives of Africa to the British Colonies.—From Bowden, for the Imposition of the Severest Penalties on all Roman Catholic Priests who shall Denounce Persons from the Altar.—From Manchester, for the Establishment of a General System of Secular Education throughout the County Palatine of Lancaster.—From Saintfield, and Durness, for facilitating the Attainment of Sites for Free Churches in Scotland.—From Forfar, for the Rejection of the Marriage (Scotland) Bill, and the Registering Births, &c. (Scotland) Bill.

PUBLIC HEALTH BILL.

Lord CAMPBELL moved the Second Reading of the Bill. He trusted that it would receive the sanction of their Lordships, for it was a most important measure, and one which, though interesting to all classes of the community, might be termed, with truth, the poor man's measure. He would make a short statement showing the effect of overcrowding, filth, and defective ventilation in two counties, one agricultural and the other manufacturing. In Westmoreland, taking a population of 10,000, 23 persons died in a year from epidemic diseases, while in Lancashire 55 died of the same diseases in a population of the same amount. In Westmoreland, the deaths from diseases of the respiratory organs were 47 in 10,000, and in Lancashire, 73 in the same number. Of those who died prematurely between the ages of 20 and 60, the number in Westmoreland was 49, and in Lancashire 68. In the union of Ulverstone, in a population of 10,000, 13 persons died from epidemic diseases, while in a union of Liverpool, 75 died from the same causes. The deaths in the whole 10,000 were in Westmoreland, 206; in Lancashire 279. The result of the whole information before them as to the state of the manufacturing districts, was, that one-half the population died before attaining the age of five years, and those who became adult had their lives shortened by a period of ten years. The evidence collected by the Sanitary Commission showed that frightful disease and mortality prevailed in the manufacturing districts owing to the non-adoption of precautions for the preservation of health. There was ample evidence that the fatal disease of cholera was aggravated, if not caused, by sewers and standing waters; and when these were removed or freed from their noxious influences, it might be hoped that the disease would either be wholly averted or at least much mitigated. The good effects which arose from attending systematically to sewerage, ventilation, and furnishing a good supply of water, were very manifest from what had been accomplished in improving the sanitary condition of prisons. Their Lordships had often heard of the gaol fever, which used not only to carry off the prisoners, but at the assizes communicated itself to the witnesses and jurors. By proper care the prisons had now been brought into a more healthy state than almost any part of Her Majesty's dominions. As a proof of the diminution of mortality which had ensued from the application of similar beneficial measures, he might mention that in some districts where the deaths had been one in 32, they had decreased to one in 39. The model lodging-houses formed another proof of what could be done in the way of sanitary improvement. Very little, he was sorry to say, had been done for the promotion of the public health through the instrumentality of legislation and governmental assistance. The attention of Government had first been called to this subject, and inquiries had been made under the Poor Law Commissioners. By those inquiries it had been found and proved to demonstration, that a vast proportion of the poverty, squalor, and wretchedness which afflicted our lower classes was caused by the indifferent sanitary arrangements under which our urban population lived. It was not, however, until the Session of 1841 that Government was able to lay a Bill before their Lordships with a view to the remedy of those evils. In that year his noble Friend (the Marquess of Normanby) brought in a Bill for the better drainage and improvement of towns, which was warmly supported by the noble Duke opposite (the Duke of Buccleuch), and received the unanimous approbation of their Lordships. It went down to the other House of Parliament, where strong objections were made to it from several quarters; a dissolution of Parliament took place, and for a time the subject was necessarily suspended. When the Administration of Sir R. Peel was formed, the noble Duke did not in the slightest degree relax from his exertions in this holy cause; and the Earl of Lincoln, who deserved the highest degree of praise for the skill and ability he had applied to the subject, introduced the Bill into the other House of Parliament, and used his best efforts to get it passed. But the subject at that time was too intricate, and the late Government was unable to make any progress with it before they retired from office. On the formation of the present Government his noble Friend Lord Morpeth, the Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests, took up the question with the greatest zeal, and, he might say, enthusiasm, and had given it his closest attention up to the present moment. If any blame could be imputed to that noble Lord, it must be for thinking that more could be accomplished than was found to be practicable. Under the superintendence of the noble Lord the present Bill had been framed and carried through the other House; this Bill he had now to offer to their Lordships for a second reading, and to which he asked their sanction. By this Bill it was proposed to create a board of general superintendence, to be presided over by the Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests, and to include two other Commissioners, one of whom would receive a salary. This Board would have the power to appoint district inspectors of sanitary matters, men of science, and wholly uninfluenced by local interests and prejudices. In cases where no local Act existed, the Board would have the power of making provisional orders, which the Privy Council would enforce; and if the present Bill met with their Lordships' approbation there would be an annual Bill to carry into effect the provisional orders made by the General Board. It had been thought too much to depute to any board the power to enact that which would be the law of the land. There would also be local boards, with a view to the more thorough and efficient operation of the new system. Where the district comprehended a municipal corporation, the local board would consist of the town-council; where no part of the district was under a municipal corporation, a board would be elected, as in the administration of the poor-laws, by the ratepayers, according to the scale thereby settled. Where the district was partly under a municipal corporation, the board would consist one-half of the town-council, and the other half of elected commissioners. The Bill also gave a power of taxation, which he hoped would be most economically and sparingly exercised for its purposes. Some had objected to the measure on the ground of the expense which would be occasioned by its working; but for his (Lord Campbell's) part, he was convinced that, instead of there being a waste of money a profit would remain, and it was easy to see how this might be effected. Some places suffered from an accumulation of manure, which was now wasted, but which, well employed, would be most precious for the profit of those towns; others suffered equally from the accumulation of water. He believed that the apprehension of excessive rates was quite unfounded, and that the result in many cases would be that the poor-rates would be lowered, because it was well known that the poor-rates were raised by disease, by the necessity for medical attendance and aid. If they considered the vast number of infants to be maintained in the poorhouses in those districts where deaths were frequent, and the vast number of persons reduced to premature old age, it would be found that the rates might be much lowered by money well laid out. The most unfounded insinuations had been made, because the Bill did not include the city of London; whereas, in fact, it excluded, not the city of London in particlar, but the whole of the metropolitan districts. The metropolitan district included a population of 2,000,000 souls; the city of London did not contain above 150,000, and it did not contribute more than one-tenth of the amount raised in the metropolitan districts. When they legislated for the metropolis, he hoped they should legislate for the city of London; when a Bill was introduced for the metropolis, he should very much lament if the city of London were to set up its privileges and immunities to mar a measure so important and beneficial. But in the present state of affairs he thought it was most prudent, and he took to himself the full share of the responsibility, to postpone the Bill for the metropolis. There were in the metropolis great peculiarities; there were eight or ten different commissions of sewers, 100 different paving boards, all which bodies must be considered. The machinery of the present Bill would not be applicable to London; there must be another Bill for the metropolis, gaining the same object by different means. He was happy to inform their Lordships that a Bill for that purpose was in contemplation. A very extensive inquiry had been made, with a view to the introduction of such a measure; and he hoped to see one laid on the table in the course of the present Session, so that it might stand over, and be considered during the recess. He trusted that this Bill would meet the assent of that House, and that their Lordships would set a great example to Europe of an anxious desire to improve the condition of the humble orders of society. They would not hold out vain promises and expectations: what they offered, that they would perform. He believed this was the very first time that the Legislature of any country had proposed to frame a general measure for improving and securing the general health of the community, and he hoped that the measure would be available for that object. He believed that at the present moment Governments would be much better employed in trying to improve the social condition of the inhabitants of the countries over which they ruled, than in adopting revolutionary measures, conceived in chimerical delusions, and aiming at accomplishing that which was impossible.

The DUKE of BUCCLEUCH agreed in all that had fallen from the noble and learned Lord opposite, as to the importance of the present measure, and congratulated their Lordships that it had come up to them with a fair prospect of being passed into law. He did not think it would have been expedient to include the metropolis in the present Bill, but was glad to hear there was a measure for that purpose in preparation, and trusted that it would be speedily brought forward, in order that their Lordships might have an opportunity of knowing what was likely to be enacted, and that the difficulties anticipated as likely to arise in respect of the city of London might be obviated. If the city were not brought under general superintendence equally with the rest of the metropolitan districts, it would be in the power of the local bodies, if their works were not executed in a proper manner, to obstruct the drainage of the whole district. He was happy to express his satisfaction with the measure, so far as it went, and was favourable to giving large powers for the objects of the Bill; indeed, he apprehended that more stringent powers would be required than were given by the measure on the table.

LORD PORTMAN said, he was strongly of opinion that Government, and all those persons who had assisted in framing this measure, and especially the noble Lord in the other House (Viscount Morpeth), to whose good feeling and conciliatory conduct its successful progress had been mainly owing, were entitled to the warmest thanks of that House for having brought the Bill before them. He was sure the whole community must rejoice that there was at length a fair prospect of passing a measure for the improvement of the sanitary condition of the people. The Bill contained a provision which was not to be objected to, because there was no other mode of attaining the object. He alluded to the power of levying a rate. There were already twenty-three or twenty-four separate assessments and modes of levying money in the local taxation of the country; and they must regret that it had been found necessary to add another rate—another body of persons for levying this rate—and another set of machinery for assessing the money. He was sure that no subject could be more worthy the attention of that House, or the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, than to devise some mode of carrying out the recommendations of the able report made by the Poor Law Commissioners in 1843, as to consolidating the local rates of this country. They would thus not only get rid of the discrepancies in the various rates, but relieve a great number of persons from the burden of collecting those rates. He believed he was right in stating that the local taxation at the present moment exceeded 20 per cent upon the income-tax valuation of the property of this country. The land tax, the highway rate, the church rate, the poor-rate (which included the county rate), exceeded in the aggregate 10,000,000*l.* per annum. That was no less than 23 per cent on the rated value of property in this country, and upon the income-tax valuation it amounted to 11 per cent. Added to that taxation, the borough rate amounted to 2,000,000*l.*—the charges for turnpike roads to 1,659,000*l.*—the local courts to more than 100,000*l.*—and there was the sewerage rate, the exact amount of which it was difficult to ascertain; and all these sums put together amounted to rather more than 20 per cent on the rated income of the country, estimated at 85,000,000*l.* In addition to this, they were now about to impose a further rate for sanitary purposes. Another measure was before the other House of Parliament, of which their Lordships would hear something soon, for a new system of highways in this country. That would create a further burden; because, although the Bill was a beneficial one, officers would be appointed under it, by which expense would be incurred. From a report which had lately been laid on their Lordships' table, it appeared that the increase in the poor-rates was frightful. In the year 1834, the last under the old system, the amount of poor-rates was 8,338,000*l.*, and the price of wheat was 51*s.* 11*d.*, and the number of quarters of wheat required to pay that poor-rate was 3,206,953. In the year 1839, when wheat was at the highest price, according to the averages since 1834, the poor-rates were 5,613,000*l.*, requiring 1,633,000 quarters of wheat to pay it. In the year 1847, when the price of wheat was 59*s.*, being 10*s.* 4*d.* less than in 1839, the poor-rates were 6,964,825*l.*, and instead of 1,633,000 quarters of wheat, 2,360,957 were required to pay that amount. In looking over those papers, he found that there had been a regular annual increase in the expenditure for the relief of the poor and for the charges for medical relief. There had been a regular increase in the fees paid to registrars and various other officers. There had been a regular annual increase in the county rate, and in the amount of medical relief. There had been, happily, a decrease in law charges, owing to a change with reference to poor removals, by which litigation had been avoided. The survey expenses, too, had decreased, but the great items of the poor-rates and county rates had regularly and steadily increased. The relief afforded in workhouses during the last year, had, in proportion to the total relief given in the whole kingdom, increased 15 per cent. In 1840, the total number of paupers in proportion to the population was seven per cent. In 1847 it had increased to ten per cent. He thought, therefore, seeing that the local taxation exceeded 20 per cent, with a probability of its soon reaching 25 per cent, that it became exceedingly important that Parliament and Her Majesty's Government should look carefully into the subject. There was a great amount of property in this country that did not contribute its fair proportion to the maintenance of the poverty of the country; and unless the question was very seriously looked into at a very early period, he was quite sure that great difficulty would arise. No doubt it was very difficult to adjust these inequalities; but some attempt ought to be made to do so. He thought that something in the form of a union rate ought to be established; or, at all events, that some plan ought to be adopted by which the area of local taxation should be extended. It was impossible not to see that if all commodities were to become cheaper, the value of the property of the country must fall too. If the annual value of property, which was now 85,000,000*l.*, should fall to 60,000,000*l.*, the present rate of local taxation would be 30 per cent; and, he would ask, what would the state of property be then, seeing that, under the present system of local taxation in many well-managed estates, the surplus, after paying those burdens, was nil? He hoped their Lordships would not think he had acted improperly in taking this opportunity of calling their attention to this subject.

The BISHOP of OXFORD said, he did not wish to trouble their Lordships with any observations upon this Bill. He merely desired to call the attention of the noble and learned Lord who had charge of the measure to the 74th and 75th sections, for regulating interments within towns. Those clauses took no notice of the provisions of the present law of the country, which required that the consent of the bishop of the diocese should be obtained to the change of parochial burial places. The power given to the boards under this Bill might very easily be abused, for parties who established a private burial ground might take measures to prevent the continuance of interments in churchyards, in order that such interments might take place in the ground in which they were interested. He also considered that the clauses, in their present form, would seriously affect the right of the poor to parochial sepulture, for no provision was made for such cases. He might add, that it afforded him great gratification to find that this Bill had been sent up to their Lordships from the Lower House, for he had a deep conviction of the necessity of such a measure.

LORD REDESDALE said, that this Bill would unquestionably render additional local rates necessary; but those rates would —except in very few cases—be paid by persons who would be most materially benefited by the measure.

The DUKE OF ARGYLL could not allow the second reading of the Bill to pass without expressing his anxious and earnest hope that the attention of the Government would be directed to extending the benefits of this measure to the country with which he was more immediately connected. He would venture to say that the great cities of Scotland—Glasgow and Edinburgh—were perhaps in a worse condition with regard to sanitary reform than any cities in England. He congratulated their Lordships upon this Bill having now escaped the difficulties which had surrounded it, and having reached the calmer consideration of their Lordships' House.

LORD CAMPBELL begged to assure the right rev. Prelate who had spoken on this subject that his suggestions should receive the most respectful consideration of the Government. With regard to the remarks of the noble Duke who had just addressed the House, he (Lord Campbell) could only say that there were at present difficulties in applying a measure of this kind to Scotland, but he hoped that—perhaps in the course of the next Session—that country might enjoy the benefits of sanitary reform.

Bill read 2ª.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, June 30, 1848.

MINUTES.] NEW WRITS.—For Sligo, *v.* Charles Towneley, Esq., void Election.—For Great Yarmouth, *v.* Lord Arthur Lennox, and Octavius Edward Coope, Esq., void Election.

PUBLIC BILLS.—1° Ecclesiastical Districts; County Cess (Ireland).

Reported.—Lunatic Asylums (Scotland); Prisons.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Aglionby, Mr. Brotherton, and other Hon. Members, from a great many Places, in favour of an Extension of the Elective Franchise.—By Mr. Bramston, from Chelmsford, and several other Places, for a Better Observance of the Lord's Day.—By Mr. Cocks, from several Medical Gentlemen, for a Reform in their Profession.—By Sir Benjamin Hall, from the Institution of Civil Engineers, against Employing any of the Ordnance Department on Local Surveys.—By Viscount Ingestre, from Guardians of the Lichfield Union, for Alteration of the Poor Law.—By Viscount Ingestre, from Plymouth, for a Superannuation Fund for Poor Law Officers.—By Mr. Wilson Patten, from Chorley, Lancashire, for an Amendment of the Small Debts Act.—By Mr. Ewart, from Edinburgh, for an Alteration of the Dealers in Spirits Bill.—By the Earl of Arundel and Surrey, from the Ticket Porters of the House of Commons, praying that their Services may be taken into Consideration.

NEW WRIT FOR SLIGO.

MR. STAFFORD rose to move that a writ be issued for the election of a burgess to serve in Parliament for the borough of Sligo. The House had ordered the evidence taken before the Sligo Election Committee to be printed; but he did not see that that should form any reason for delaying the issue of the writ. The evidence might be of importance in enabling the House to come to some conclusion on the general question; it might furnish materials for future legislation. He had no means of knowing whether the Gentleman who was formerly returned for Sligo was likely to be again sent to that House by the constituency. He did not know whether they were likely to send an adherent of the old Conservative party, or a supporter of the Government, or one who would join the small party which had encamped under the banner of the hon. Member for Montrose. In Sligo, no bribery had been proved before the Committee, no special report had been made, and all that was charged against the candidates was, that they had been guilty of treating. But the greatest purist would, he thought, be disposed to admit that, if anywhere treating was excusable, it was in the province of Connaught. It was most desirable to secure the attendance of Irish Members from that period of the Session, for on that, the last day of June, they had not commenced the Irish business. Convinced as he was that the inquiry with respect to this borough, as with respect to other boroughs, might be carried to a successful termination after the issue of the writ, he would move—

"That Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown in Ireland to make out a New Writ for the Election of a Burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Sligo, in the room of Charles Towneley, Esq., whose Election has been determined to be void."

MR. HUME was sorry the hon. Gentleman should have proposed his Motion, apparently in contravention of the rules of the House. ["No, no!"] He had never known an instance in which a Motion had been made for the issue of a writ for a borough where any Member had in the meantime proposed that the evidence taken before the Election Committee should be printed. The hon. Member for Portarlington had moved that the evidence be printed in the present case, and this was not the time, therefore, for issuing the writ.

MR. ANSTEY had supported the Motion for issuing the writ in every other case, and would do so in this instance also. He was glad the hon. Member for Montrose had intimated his opposition to the Motion, and so indicated an intention to diminish the representation of the small constituencies. The fate of Sligo would hereafter be that of Youghal and every small borough.

Colonel DUNNE said, there was no accusation in the report of the Committee against the borough of Sligo; and he conceived, therefore, that he might move the writ at once. He heard afterwards, however, that it would be more consonant with the forms of the House that the evidence should first be moved for; and therefore he altered his Motion to the effect that the evidence should be printed. He felt that there, as well as in the case of the English Members, the suspension of the writ was exceedingly inconvenient.

Sir J. HANMER had been told within the last few minutes that they might expect a new petition from the borough of Horsham. He could not understand the distinction which some Gentlemen drew between the guilt of treating and bribery. The one as well as the other caused the loss of a Member's seat; and that was a thing which Members ought to take into their serious consideration. He was the less inclined to pass by treating as less worthy of punishment than bribery, because he entertained the opinion that the law with regard to treating was ridiculous and absurd: and he saw no chance of its being altered until the House had made inquiries into the particulars of those elections which had been declared to be void in consequence of treating. He should vote for the suspension of the writ till the evidence had been laid on the table of the House.

Mr. BANKES: With respect to the present question, it appeared that the hon. and gallant Member for Portarlington (Colonel Dunne) had moved for the evidence under an error. That evidence was not moved for by the Chairman, or any Member of the Committee; but the hon. and gallant Member for Portarlington, not being well acquainted with the forms of the House, and having the intention to expedite the issuing of the writ, moved that the evidence be printed, which, instead of forwarding his object, had proved the only obstacle to it. Under these circumstances, it was very hard that the Sligo constituency should suffer.

Sir G. GREY said, the simple question was, whether a Motion having been made that the evidence be printed, and it being probable that that evidence would be forthcoming in two or three days, it would not be better to wait till the evidence was in the hands of Members, than to follow the course proposed by the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Stafford), and issue the writ now. He hoped the hon. Gentleman would not press his Motion; but if the hon. Member did, he would vote against it.

Mr. NEWDEGATE supported the Motion. It would be unfair to take advantage of the mistake of the hon. and gallant Member for Portarlington, who had been led to believe that it was according to the established practice of the House that no writ should be issued until the evidence was printed; whereas the practice of the House during the present Session could scarcely be said to have been established at all, writs having been issued in almost every possible way. The only thing that seemed to be established was, the office of suspender-general, which had been assumed by the hon. Baronet the Member for the Flint boroughs. It appeared to him to be ridiculous to suspend writs in cases where the Committee had decided that the evidence involved no matter which would justify disfranchisement; and if the House really wished to deal with this class of boroughs on some comprehensive scheme, like that proposed by the hon. Member for the Flint boroughs, it would be far better that the boroughs so to be dealt with should be represented in that House, and there would thereby be some security that they would receive fair play.

Mr. WRIGHTSON, as Chairman of the Committee on the Sligo Election, begged to state that the inquiry did not impress the minds of the Committee with the idea that the House would ultimately decline to issue a writ for the borough of Sligo. It appeared to him that the evidence had most unnecessarily been ordered to be printed, for when they had got it, he did not believe it would have the least effect in inducing them to suspend the writ. He should certainly vote for the issuing of the writ himself; but, at the same time, as the evidence had been ordered to be printed, and as other Members had not had the same opportunity of knowing the facts as the Committee had, it would be the most correct course for the House to delay taking any further step in the matter till the evidence was printed.

Mr. SPOONER hoped the writ would be issued without waiting for the evidence.

Sir R. PEEL: There certainly does seem some inconsistency in ordering the evidence to be produced, and then not waiting until that evidence is produced before issuing the writ, because the ordering of the evidence is the act of the House of Commons; but, at the same time, if we have been betrayed into the adoption of an act without sufficient consideration, I think the rights of the constituency ought to prevail over a desire to consult appearances in regard to the character of the House. The hon. Gentleman who moved for the evidence is a Member of the House for the first time. He moved for that evidence, not intending that its production should be a reason for delay; and it was a very pardonable inadvertency on his part to make that Motion. Still, as the House has adopted the Motion, I should have been disposed to acquiesce in the proposed delay of a few days if it had not been for the speech of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Northallerton (Mr. Wrightson), which I think is quite decisive. It is rather unfortunate that the Chairman is not the organ of a Committee, and that he is not requested as Chairman to state what he thinks fit; but I have great confidence in the impartiality and justice of the views of the hon. Gentleman, and he tells me that his impression is, that when we have got the evidence, he does not believe we will suspend the writ. I must say, therefore, that I think the rights of the constituency, where there is no valid reason for delay, ought to prevail with us, and that the writ should be issued forthwith.

Colonel PENNANT, as one of the Members of the Committee, begged to corroborate the statement of the hon. Member for Northallerton as to the impression on the minds of the Committee that the evidence afforded no proof of such general corruption as to warrant the suspension of the writ.

Mr. HUME, after the statement that had been made by the Chairman of the Committee and the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken, would not persist in opposing the Motion.

Motion agreed to *nem. con.*

CLAIMS ON THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT.

Viscount PALMERSTON said, in reply to some questions put by Mr. Urquhart, that the hon. Gentleman had stated that, by the additional article the British Government were to furnish the Spanish Government with arms and ammunition; but there was a distinct agreement entered into afterwards between the Spanish Government and the British Government that those supplies should be paid for; and a return was made several years ago stating the amount supplied, and the amount remaining still to be supplied. The claim, therefore, was admitted by the Crown of Spain, and although it was not pressed for payment, yet it was acknowledged as a debt, and was founded upon an agreement entered into between the Spanish Minister at this Court and the British Government.

SUGAR DUTIES—COMMITTEE.

Order of the day read.

House in Committee on the Sugar Duties.

Question put—

> "That in lieu of the Duties of Customs now payable on Sugar or Molasses, the following Duties," &c.

[as stated in the Commons' debate of the 29th inst ;—see *ante*, p. 1400.]

Mr. BRIGHT said that he rose for the purpose of moving an Amendment to the resolutions submitted to the Committee by Her Majesty's Government, and he would commence by saying that, though this question of protection to the West India colonies had been debated for so many nights, the real question which the House had to consider, had, in fact, not been debated at all, except incidentally. The discussion had been between the Government, who were in favour of some increase of protection, and the hon. Gentlemen opposite, who were in favour of a very large increase of protection; and the arguments, both of the Members of her Majesty's Government and of hon. Gentlemen opposite, had been, in his opinion, entirely condemnatory and destructive of the proposition which the noble Lord had introduced to the House. The conclusion which he drew from the speeches of hon. Gentlemen opposite was, that the distress in the West Indian colonies was so great—and he would admit that it was great—that the measure proposed by the Government could not be productive of any sensible relief; while, from the speeches made on the part of the Government, and especially from the speech of the noble Lord, and that of the hon. Member for Westbury in particular, he found that they relied on arguments which had convinced him that whatever distress existed in the West Indian colonies, it could not be relieved by any measure of protection. There was one thing that must have struck every Member who had listened to the past debate, and that was, that throughout one great party had been entirely forgotten, while abundance of sympathy had been expressed on behalf of the planters, and of the mortgagees at home, and of the slaves in Cuba and Brazil, and of the Africans in their own country, who were liable to be seized on by the slavedealers. Now, he was of opinion that this question was of great importance to other parties besides these. He did not wish to shut out of view the interests of the planters, or of the slaves, or of the Africans, but he should beg of the House not to ignore that great party in this country for whose benefit the Act of 1846 had been passed. He stood up there on behalf of that great class in the United Kingdom by whom the article of sugar was consumed; and on their part he intended asking the Committee that night to refuse to alter the Sugar Duties Act of 1846. The question as it had been discussed by hon. Gentlemen in favour of protection, divided itself into two branches, one connected with slavery and the slave trade, and the other connected with protection. The hon. Baronet the Member for Droitwich (Sir J. Pakington), who moved the Amendment in the recent debate, had spoken about the most holy struggle for freedom in which the people of this country had been engaged up to 1834. Now, he did not know how the hon. Baronet had voted previous to that year, as they had not any very perfect record of the divisions at that time. [Sir J. Pakington: I was not in Parliament at all.] In that case his argument would not apply to the hon. Baronet, but it applied to many of those other hon. Gentlemen who were now in favour of protection, but who, if he did not mistake, were by no means in favour of freedom for the slaves up to the passing of the Emancipation Act. He believed that the hon. Baronet the Member for the University of Oxford, among others, was not warmly in favour of the abolition of slavery up to 1834; and he should confess that he, for one, had not much sympathy with that benevolence which was merely connected with a high price of sugar. He thought that those who were in favour of protection ought to argue the question on that ground, and leave the philanthropic view of the matter entirely out of sight. The hon. Baronet the Member for Droitwich had brought forward some figures to show that a large increase had taken place in the cultivation of sugar in Cuba and Brazil, in consequence of the passing of the Act of 1846, and had read a statement of the great increase that had followed the passing of that Act in the exportation of machinery from England to those countries. He did not dispute the accuracy of the hon. Baronet's figures at all, but he disputed the argument which the hon. Member drew from them. The hon. Baronet took the period from 1844 to 1847, and he stated that within those years the value of the machinery exported to Cuba had increased from 6,500*l.* to 17,600*l.*, and to Brazil from 17,500*l.* to 35,000*l.* But the hon. Baronet forgot to tell the House that immediately after the first period which he had taken up, the law had been repealed by that House which prevented the exportation of machinery; and if the hon. Baronet had made the same comparison with regard to other countries that were not sugar-producing countries, he would find the increase to be in a much more rapid ratio than in the case of Cuba or Brazil. He did not mean to say that the hon. Baronet had failed to show that any improvement had taken place in the cultivation of sugar in Cuba and Brazil; but what he contended for was, that he had failed altogether in showing any connexion between that improvement and the Acts of 1845 and 1846. But the hon. Baronet had also given them other figures. He had referred to papers which most Members of the House had seen, signed by the Chairman and Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Committee; but he would beg to call the hon. Member's attention for a moment to these figures. According to these papers, it was stated on the authority of Parliamentary returns that between 1835 and 1840, the number of slaves sent to the Brazils and to Cuba annually averaged 101,000, whereas in the five years from 1840 to 1845, the number of slaves imported into those countries averaged only 32,000 annually. It was, therefore, argued that a great falling-off had taken place in the slave trade in this latter period. But before the House could form a judgment on that point, they should know the importation of slaves before 1835. He supposed that the slave trade was regulated very much as other more lawful trades, and that the supply depended on the demand, and on the requirements of cultivation. Now, if these five years had followed a period of excessive cultivation, it was evident that the demand must have been very great, and when that demand was once met, that then there would have been for the next five years a considerable falling-off. Following that rule they would find that if there had been a very small importation for the five years prior to 1835, there would then be a very much increased demand until the demand was again overtaken by the supply, when they would have another falling-off in the trade. Accordingly they found that after the short supply for the five years ending in 1845, the demand again increased until, in 1846, the importation amounted to 64,000. Now he would ask the House to look to the dishonesty of these papers, for the parties who published them, must, he thought, have known that the figures did not bear out the result which they sought to derive from them. Let the House recollect that the present Government did not come into office until July 1846, and that their Sugar Duties Bill was not introduced until the 20th July. No positive information of the intentions of the Government could therefore have reached Cuba or Brazil until the end of August; and then ships would have to be sent out to the coast of Africa, and cargoes brought back before the news could have any effect on the importation of slaves for that year. Now, he would ask the House whether it was possible that a Bill, not introduced until the 20th July, and that did not pass that House until the month of August, could have had any effect whatever on the introduction of slaves into Cuba and Brazil during the year 1846, or could have been the cause of the increased importation in that year? But he now came to the year 1847, when the effect of the Bill of 1846 would have been felt, if at all, and he found that in that year the importation of slaves into Cuba and Brazil was 63,000, or 1,000 less than it had been in 1846. If, therefore, the Bill of 1846 was not at all instrumental in causing the importation of slaves to reach 64,000 in 1846, he would ask where was the proof that it could have stimulated the trade in 1847, the importation for that year being less than for 1846 by 1,000? He would say, therefore, that the whole case, as far as facts and figures went, broke down in showing that the Bill of 1846 had given any impetus to the slave trade of Cuba and Brazil. He was not going to deny that the opening of a great market like the market of this country to the produce of Cuba and Brazil would have given an impetus to their trade and cultivation. It would be a sign of ignorance on his part were he to argue in favour of such an assumption. But he would ask them to bear in mind that any such impetus must have been only temporary, and that the competition of all the sugar of the world in all the markets of the world would in a brief period bring down the rate of profits to its natural level. And here, he should beg to observe, that he stood there as great an opponent of slavery as any man in that House or elsewhere. He regarded slavery as the greatest crime that the world had probably ever seen; but he thought that they ought to be careful not to allow their feelings to be worked up by such statements as that which had been read last night by the hon. Baronet the Member for the University of Oxford, about the horrors of the middle passage and of the slave trade. They should take care that they did not act unjustly to the inhabitants of this country in attempting to put down by fiscal regulations a crime in which they did not participate. He now came to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, the Member for the University of Oxford (Mr. Gladstone), a speech which was characteristic of him in many respects. There was in it a great deal of balancing, and much that was calculated to leave the House very much in doubt. The right hon. Gentleman did not seem to know precisely what he wanted; he wanted some emigration, but not much emigration: he wanted some protection, but not much protection: he thought that the vote of 500,000*l.* would have an injurious effect on the public revenue, but still he said that what he wanted was money. [Mr. GLADSTONE: I spoke of the first duty of the Government being towards this country.] He admitted that the right hon. Gentleman had expressed a very wise and honest opinion, that their first duty was to consider the state of the finances of the country; but he had stated, at the same time, that what the West Indian colonies wanted was, in one shape or another, money. But where were they to get the money unless from the Chancellor of the Exchequer? and if the money were taken from him, he (Mr. Bright) thought, that the finances of the country must be affected. The right hon. Gentleman had gone minutely into the question of compensation money; and he would wish to call the right hon. Gentleman's attention for a moment to that subject. The right hon. Gentleman had stated that the sum paid was very inadequate, considering the actual value of the slaves emancipated; that, in fact, it was only 45 per cent on the value of the slaves. Now, he would grant that the fact was so; but how much, he would ask, did the compensation amount to, as compared with the actual value of all the trade and profits of these islands? He had stated the other night what the proportion was with regard to the West Indies generally, and he would now come to particular islands. He would take the three colonies on which most stress had been laid during the debate—Jamaica, Trinidad, and British Guiana. Taking the period between 1830 and 1840, he found that 1833 was the year in which Jamaica exported to the largest extent; and in that year her exports amounted to 3,148,000*l.* Estimating the profit of the planters on that amount at 10 per cent, he found that the profit on the whole of that trade would be 314,000*l.* Now, the share of compensation awarded to the Jamaica planters was 6,150,000*l.*; and if that sum had been put out to interest at 5 per cent, at the time, it would have produced an annual income of 307,000*l.*, which was within 7,000*l.* of the whole profits of their previous trade estimated at 10 per cent. With regard to Trinidad, the case was still worse. In the ten years from 1832 to 1842 the average amount of their exports was 396,000*l.* a year, and allowing a profit of 13 per cent on that sum, they had a total profit of 51,000*l.* a year. The compensation awarded to Trinidad was 1,033,000*l.*, which if lent out at 5 per cent interest would produce 51,600*l.* a year, being somewhat more than the whole of the profits of their export trade estimated at 13 per cent. With respect to British Guiana, he found that in the period from 1832 to 1842, the average export amounted to 1,624,000; and allowing 13 per cent profit on that sum, they would have 211,000*l.* The amount of compensation given to British Guiana was 4,300,000*l.*; and 5 per cent interest on that sum would be 214,000*l.*, or 3,000*l.* more than the whole annual value of their trade at 13 per cent of profit. The right hon. Gentleman smiled at this calculation, and no doubt thought that he (Mr. Bright) must have made some very egregious mistake. He did not mean to say that the West Indian planters had not made more than 13 per cent profit on their cultivation; but he could only say, that that rate was, he was sure, much more than the average profits of most persons in trade in this country. Taking the whole of the West Indian colonies, they would find that 5 per cent on the compensation money awarded to them, would be equal to more than 15 per cent on the entire amount of their export trade to this country. Now, this was an enormous compensation to have given to them, when it was recollected that they were left all their estates, buildings, implements, and floating capital; and it was, at all events, he thought, a full compensation, as between the cost of slave labour and the cost of free labour. The right hon. Gentleman complained of the early termination of the apprenticeship system; and he (Mr. Bright) was not disposed to shrink from that point, for he would say, that it was the conduct of the planters themselves that had led to the abolition of the apprenticeship system. But it was said, that an honourable understanding had been entered into with the planters that they should have a perpetual monopoly of the market of this country. He could find no trace of any such understanding having taken place; but if made, it certainly was not an honourable one, for no Government could possibly have the power to make it. For eleven years after emancipation they had had a monopoly of this market. They received not less than 15*s.* per cwt. more, upon the average, for their sugar, during those eleven years, than the selling price in the open market of the world. How much did 15*s.* per cwt. upon all their sugar produced in those eleven years amount to? It amounted to not less than 30,000,000 sterling—a sum as clearly a compensation or a bounty to the planters as the 20,000,000 awarded to them in 1834. If this were true, he should like to know whether Parliament owed anything to our sugar-producing colonies—in his opinion, they owed much to the consumers and the country. It was certainly not the duty of Parliament to make sugar growing profitable. The noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) might differ from him upon that point; indeed it appeared, from the noble Lord's resolutions, that he held it to be one of the special duties of the British House of Commons to make sugar cultivation profitable in the British colonies. Suppose the principle was correct, was sugar the only trade that should be made profitable? He could take the noble Lord from one to the other of all the staple trades of this country, and show him that last year not one of them was profitable. But they asked for no protection; they could not point to 15 or 20 years' exclusive monopoly of the best market in the world with prices from 40 to 50 per cent higher than the general prices of the world by Act of Parliament. The ryots in India had no protection in the cultivation of cotton; the grower of wool in Australia had no protection. Why, then, should the grower of sugar? And if the noble Lord talked of the reduction of price in sugar, did he not know that Australian wool, which not long ago was sold for 1*s.* 9*d.* per lb., was now at 1*s.*, and could scarcely be sold at that? It became a question, then, for the consideration of Parliament, when they were asked to grant more money from the pockets of the people, whether the colonies had themselves done their duty? He had had a good deal of conversation recently with gentlemen from Guiana and Trinidad, and he understood from them that in Guiana the plough was not known in the cultivation of estates, that drainage was not practised, that everything was done in the rudest manner, and upon a system which would soon be the utter ruin of a cultivator in this country. As to Trinidad, he had express information that sometimes hogsheads of sugar were absolutely kept from the beach because the roads were impassable, although the ship was no more than five miles from the estate, and ready to receive them. In point of fact, there was scarcely a road in the island. In Jamaica the same wants occurred. Had the Jamaica planters made the Jamaica Railway? Did the men who now asked for protection take shares in that undertaking, and pay the calls; or was the undertaking begun, completed, and was it now carried on by the patronage and support of men who repudiated the doctrine of protection altogether? He should notice in the next place the trade regulations of the colonies. A great majority of estates were said to be in the hands of mortgagees; and what, he would ask, was the usual course taken with an estate in the hands of a mortgagee? Why, the owner was not his own master—the mortgagee was the master. Parliament was asked, as he understood it, to advance money to enable the planters to pay off the mortgagees, and enable them to cultivate their own estates. The merchant in England, as the mortgagee, took care that all the produce should come in his own ships. The planter had no voice or authority as to the rates of freight or brokerage; the charges, therefore, were necessarily high, everything was in the hands of the mortgagee, and everybody who knew what pawnbroking or mortgageeing was, would at once perceive that when a man got into such a predicament, there was very small chance of his being able to get out of it. In fact, on this account to this hour the West Indies had no trade but with this country. They could not trade with America. An American trade, therefore, had not grown up at all with them. Another evil to the West Indian colonies, arising from this system, was, that though large quantities of provisions were brought from America, the American ships which brought them could take no return cargo from the West Indies. They consequently took coin in return for their produce from the West Indies, and then passed over to Cuba, where they took in cargoes of slave-grown sugar, with which they supplied even our fellow-subjects in Canada. In consequence of the drain so created, there was the greatest want of a circulating medium in the colonies. A letter received from Trinidad, dated the 7th of May, described how that colony was suffering from the depreciation of produce and the want of specie:—

> "We are suffering here from the depreciation in produce, and particularly from want of specie. We very much require another bank here, as the Colonial Bank is refusing now to buy the best bills of exchange upon bill of lading attached, and therefore there are no means of raising money upon the produce shipped. We have now very near 10,000 hogsheads cleared out, and I think this crop will be nearly as good as last year's, but planters will have to import coin from England in return for their produce, to enable them to pay off their labourers, for in the island there is none. The Americans have carried away the few dollars that were left."

He held in his hand a letter from a Member of the Jamaica House of Assembly, which contained the following passages, omitting the names of the parties:—

> "I quite agree with you, that under the new system of things the West Indies can never again prosper until they are released from the tyranny of the absentee mortgagees, their exactions in the shape of interest, commission, freight, and other charges, being truly ruinous and oppressive. In addition to the above, there are several other ways by which absentee proprietors are injured — I might say plundered—by the mortgagees at home, which are even worse than high interest or exorbitant commissions. The mortgagee in England is at the same time a shipowner; he sends a ship out to his planting attorney with positive orders to fill her up from A, B, C, D, &c., and sail upon a certain day. The attorney writes to the overseers, giving them orders to put the mills about, as he expects 100 casks from each for the *Lady Sarah Bayley*, or other ships, by a certain day. The overseers, in their turn, write to say that they cannot have so much produce by the time, because the canes are not ripe, and therefore not fit to cut; in fact, if cut, what would make 100 casks, if left two or three months, would not make 60 casks. The attorney, having the fear of a *supersedeas* from the mortgagee before his eyes, tells the over-

seer—'My orders are positive, and must be obeyed; if you cannot carry them out, I must get some one who will.' Your friend and relative told me that he has thus lost a very good situation by refusing to carry out such orders. I have with my own eyes seen canes cut at nine, ten, and eleven months old, when they should have remained until they were fourteen or fifteen months; and I have known sugars potted one day and carried to the ship the next; and I have even followed the carts containing the sugars to the wharfs, and the molasses, dripping from these sugars, left visible traces the whole way from the estate to the ship's boat, thus losing all the molasses from which rum is made; and when it is considered that the rum, on an average, should be as one to two of the sugar, the loss in this way alone must be enormous. I have myself been interested in vessels taking produce at 3*s.* 6*d.* and 4*s.* per cwt., and I have solicited planters and proprietors for their shipments at these rates; but the answers were, 'We are sorry that we cannot take advantage of your offer, we are compelled to give all our produce to the ships of the mortgagee.' Again, I have known sugars remain on the estates and wharfs for months after they were cured, waiting for ships to take them, although they might have been shipped in vessels in the port at less rate. One instance of the kind I recollect that was of so glaring a nature that it was talked of at the time by everybody here, and if I mistake not, this particular lot of sugar remained on the wharf something like five months, for a ship to take it at 5*s.* per cwt., while there were ships in port meantime which would have shipped it at 4*s.* per cwt. But wo to the attorney who would dare to give one ounce of sugar to any vessel but the one belonging to, or sent out by, the merchant. It would indeed be a great blessing to the poor proprietors could any measures be devised to rescue them from these cormorants, the West India body."

In the sentiments of this letter he concurred; and, as connected with it, he now came to the extraordinary expenses of the colonies. There could be no doubt the colonies had great grounds for complaint on this score. The same correspondent said—

> "Another serious oppression is the enormous amount of taxation, which, unless the Crown interposes, I see no hope of getting reduced, for if the House of Assembly pass a Bill reducing the expenditure, it is sure to be thrown out by the Council, every member of which, with one exception, is a placeman."

And he went on to say, that the Governor had 7,000*l.* a year, the Lord Bishop 3,000*l.* a year, the Commander of the Forces 4,000*l.*, the Vice Chancellor 2,500*l.*, the Chief Justice 1,200*l.*, &c. It was a most intolerable grievance that we should be called upon to pay bishops and clergy of any sect. Surely we had enough to do to maintain morality and religion in our own country without expending more money to maintain bishops and priests on the other side of the Atlantic. But returning to these trade arrangements, he would ask, how could the colonial interests flourish under such a system? What is the result of such a system in other trades? Take an illustration from his own trade. It was sometimes the case in the cotton trade for spinners and manufacturers of deficient capital to send all they manufactured to commission agents in Manchester to be sold. The commission agent bought the cotton in the first instance, and in the second he received the produce of the mill for sale. The commission agent, having received the produce, sold it just as he pleased, charging a commission to the spinner or manufacturer. When a spinner thus could not buy his cotton in the cheapest market and sell its produce to the best advantage, the inevitable result was, that when times of severe pressure came, those persons were broken down. Precisely the same thing had occurred to some East Indian houses of late, which for a long time had been in an insecure state. The noble Lord, in one of the first resolutions he moved in the Committee, stated—

> "That British plantation sugar, averaging in May, 1846, 36*l.* 10*s.* a ton, fell between that period and the 11th September, 1847, 10*l.* 5*s.* a ton; that consequent upon this fall in the value of their produce, Messrs. Gower, Nephews, and Co., and other firms largely connected with sugar plantation, fell."

The fact was, these firms were insolvent before. They had departed from all the regular course of business, having invested their money in indigo estates and sugar plantations; and when the pressure in the money market came in April, 1847, and again in October, nothing could be more certain than that houses which had so departed from all the ordinary principles of business should fall victims to their imprudence. Some of these "great houses" were now paying 1*s.*, 2*s.*, and 4*s.* in the pound. Was it to support such establishments as these that the British Parliament ought to add to the price of sugar? He denied the principle altogether. The noble Lord also spoke in one of his resolutions of the consignee of nineteen estates having determined not to advance more money. What did this fact prove, but that the estates were carried on upon borrowed money? Again, he asked, was it for this intolerable system that the noble Lord asked the House to add to the price of the sugar consumed by the great mass of the people in the United Kingdom? In another resolution, the noble Lord stated the difficulty the planters had in finding money to carry on their cultivation. This was the most prevalent complaint made at this moment in Lancashire and Yorkshire; but the spinners and manufacturers there had never once asked Parliament to advance them money to increase the profit of their mills and machinery. The question of protection, he contended, was understood to have been settled in 1846. The noble Lord at the head of the Government had, however, revived it in his present measure. He might have recollected that the Cabinet of which he was a Member was in 1841 broken up by it; that the Cabinet of the right hon. Baronet opposite was broken up by it in 1846; and that this very morning the Cabinet of the noble Lord was *in articulo mortis*, but was saved by the votes of fifteen Members, all of whom disapproved of the course he had taken; otherwise, the present would have been the third Cabinet in seven years broken up on the question of protection. It so happened that the consumers were first heard upon this question in 1846, and that then a compromise was made. The noble Lord admitted it; it was not so good, however, as that which the right hon. Baronet opposite made with regard to corn; but still it was assented to as a final settlement. Hon. Members who might fairly claim to represent consumers, did not oppose the measure of the noble Lord, because they considered it a kind of compromise which, if not necessary, could hardly be objected to. If he had been the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell), he would have stood at the table and defended the measure of 1846 upon the ground of its important results, both as to commerce and revenue; for there had probably never been a Bill passed with more admirable results more clearly and speedily demonstrated. [Lord J. RUSSELL: I stated that.] But the noble Lord had not adhered to it. Now, what had been the result of the Sugar Bill of 1846? He would speak of revenue and consumption, and would take a period of eight months before, and two periods of eight months since, the passing of the Act. The first period would be from September, 1845, to May, 1846; the second eight months from September, 1846, to May, 1847; and the third from September, 1847, to May, 1848. In the first period there had been imported 3,555,000 cwts.; in the second, 4,349,300; and in the third, 4,235,000 cwts.: the increase being, in the second period over the first, 795,000 cwts.; and in the third period over the first, 680,000 cwts. With regard to the revenue, there were received in the eight months before the Bill, 2,516,000*l.*; in the second period, after the Bill, 3,405,000*l.*; and in the third period, 3,121,000*l.*; so that in the eight months after the Bill passed, as compared with the eight months before, the revenue gained 880,000*l.*; and in the eight months last mentioned, as compared with the first, the revenue had been a gainer to the extent of 604,000*l.* But the noble Lord appeared only recently to have made the change he now determined to propose; for so late as the 30th of May, the same evening when the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) presented the report of his Committee, he made the following statement to the House, in answer to a question from the hon. Member for Montrose:—

> "Lord J. Russell said, that the question proposed by the hon. Gentleman, as to the intentions of Government, was rather vague. He could state, however, that it was not the intention of the Government to make any change in the Act of 1846, with the view of increasing the amount of the differential duties, or continuing them for a longer period than fixed by the Act."

The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had also intimated, more than once, the determination of the Government to adhere to the Act of 1846; and the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, in his speech upon the navigation laws, strongly intimated that Government had no intention of adopting again the principle of protection with regard to the colonies. On that ground the right hon. Gentleman urged that the navigation laws should be repealed, in order that the colonies, if they had free trade as against them, should have a measure of free trade in their favour. He wished to call attention to another inconsistency. It was sought by this Bill to give increased protection till more labour could be imported. The noble Lord opposite asked for 10*s.* duty for a given number of years, in order to prepare for that competition which he believed, some day or other, they would be obliged to meet. But more labour would not enable them to compete; for Mauritius and Barbadoes now had labour enough, and they were also ruined. The noble Lord stated in one of his resolutions—

> "That your Committee find, that of all the West Indian colonies, Barbadoes, from the circumstances of her position, with a population more dense than that of China—driven in a great measure to the necessity of industry from the island not producing food enough for the subsistence of its people—is still unable, even with the nominal protection now existing of 6*s.* a cwt., successfully

to compete against the slave-grown sugar of Cuba and of Brazil."

He concluded from this that the noble Lord was of opinion that Barbadoes and Mauritius were unable to compete with slave countries in sugar, although they might have an abundant population. What, then, was the use of voting the 500,000*l.* which the people of this country or the colonies must pay? Why should it go to increase the population of the West India colonies, if we found from the example of Barbadoes and Mauritius, it would be impossible to compete with the labour of Cuba or Brazil? The question of immigration was much more serious than many hon. Members might consider it. The colonies or their proprietors which had to pay back this 500,000*l.* to the mother country, would extract it from the taxes of the people under their rule. Now, nothing, in his opinion, could be more monstrous than that the free labourers of the West Indies should be taxed to bring labourers from Africa to bring down their wages. If it were proposed to tax the working people of Lancashire, in order to bring over 30,000 or 50,000 Irishmen to compete in the cotton trade with them, he was convinced there would be considerable disturbance, and protests of which that House would not be slow to recognise the force. But the free negroes in the West Indies were a great way off. The House had statements before them from Governors who received 7,000*l.* a year, and from the West India Association, who were the mortgagees of the West India estates; but there was nobody to present to the House the hardship to the free labourers by bringing other labour from Africa to reduce their wages, and to contaminate them with the barbarism and bestiality which prevail in their native country. He came now to the details of the noble Lord's measure; and he thought he should be able to show that the protection under it was so great that it would be found acceptable by hon. Gentlemen opposite, when they could get no more. [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: They will never refuse anything.] He believed the right hon. Gentleman was perfectly correct. Hon. Gentlemen opposite reminded him of the proboscis of an elephant. They could take up a needle, or tear up a tree. They talked loudly when they thought they could secure something great, but never refused very little as soon as they found they could get no more. But the proposal of Her Majesty's Government was more protective than the Act of 1846. By that Act, the whole protection was to cease in three years; but by the present proposal, it would not cease till the 5th of July, 1854. Then, what was the difference in amount? On this subject, he would call in aid the hon. Member for Westbury. The hon. Gentleman was considered a "learned pundit" in these matters; but since he had got upon the Treasury bench, he by no means told all he knew. The protection by the Bill of 1846, assuming the production to be the same in future years, amounted to 2,865,000*l.* The same production under the discriminating duties of the new Bill, would make the protection amount to 9,425,000*l.*: and if he deducted the protection of the Bill of 1846 from that of 1848, there would thus be left an additional protection of 6,560,000*l.* running over the next six years. It must also be borne in mind that one-half of the colonial sugar which entered this country did not come from the West India islands in which there was a deficiency of labour. Of the whole amount, Barbadoes sent 23,000 tons, the East Indies, 70,000, and the Mauritius, 60,000, in all 153,000; leaving only 137,000 for all the rest of the colonies. But the House was asked to give double the amount of protection which, on their own principles, the advocates of protection could claim, since in the places which he had mentioned, there was no deficiency of labour. It was a most clumsy proposition, that because one party had a debt owing to him by this country, his first cousin should also be admitted to an equal share in what was granted. If anything were due, let the statement of the case be laid on the table; and when they knew what they had to pay, they ought at once to pay honourably, and have done with the matter for ever. His hon. Colleague said—and no doubt he was right—that whatever they might do, they would never get a receipt in full. It was a sort of instinct of the colonial interest never to give one, as if they wished to reserve to themselves the opportunity of imitating Mr. Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, who was said to have been always asking for more. If the present proposition were carried, the West Indians would still come to Parliament again and again, and that very proposition would be their justification for every future demand. They would say, in effect, "Parliament has admitted that the measure of 1846 was not a just one, and that something more is still due to us." Now, the hon. Member for Westbury (Mr. J. Wilson) had a theory, or rather, he had two theories, and they contradicted each other. He had one theory in that House, and it was that it would be a great advantage to have a fall of duty to the extent of 10*s.* per cwt. He (Mr. Bright) admitted, that low duties were advantageous to the revenue, if carried to a certain point, and altogether advantageous to the consumer. But he had the authority of the hon. Member for Westbury out of doors, for the doctrine that the highest duty regulated the price, and that the price regulated the consumption. [Mr. Wilson: Hear, hear!] The hon. Gentleman, in arguing in opposition to those who maintained that it was advisable to raise the duty on foreign sugar 4*s.*, and to lower the duty on colonial sugar 4*s.*, observed very justly that Parliament could not give a protection of 10*s.* without inflicting a loss somewhere, and that the loss must, in fact, fall, directly or indirectly, on the consumer. In further dealing with that question, the hon. Gentleman said—"We are aware that it is urged by many, that a reduction of the colonial duty would be recompensed to the Exchequer by an increased consumption. Nothing can be more fallacious. The consumption must be determined by the price to the consumer. The price will be determined by the highest duty, that is, on foreign sugar; and, therefore, as a reduction in the duty on colonial sugar would not reduce the price, it would not increase consumption, and this, in the present rapid increase of the growth of sugar, would not be the least of the evils of such a system." How, then, could the hon. Member and the noble Lord (Lord John Russell) contend, that the fall of 10*s.* in the duty would be a compensation to the public for giving to the West Indies increased protection? The duty on foreign sugar, from the 5th of July next, was to be 20*s.*, then 18*s.* 6*d.*, then 17*s.*, then 15*s.* 6*d.*, and then 14*s.* 6*d.*; and it was not till 1852 that the consumer would be placed in the same position as he would have occupied under the Bill of 1846. How was any compensation for increased protection afforded to the consumer when he could have had all this reduction of duties without any such increase? If the Government were a despotic body, not acting in trust for the people, and not giving anything to the people as a right, but giving to them whatever was given just as a bone was thrown to a dog, there would then be something in the argument of the hon. Member for Westbury; but if that were not the character of the Government, and if they could afford the loss of revenue which would, he believed, take place, they should have reduced the duty and stimulated consumption, without increasing protection. The noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) had stated—and nothing more true had been said in the course of the debate—that they must look to a constantly-increasing consumption as the real security of the colonies. There could be no doubt that to encourage the greatest possible consumption was the most likely means of delivering the colonists from their present embarrassed condition. As regarded the revenue, the noble Lord had stated on the previous night that he thought the loss of revenue would not be very great, the highest estimate which had been formed being, he said 40,000*l.*, and the lowest about 10,000*l.* He (Mr. Bright) hoped that if the hon. Member for Westbury, or any other Member of the Government, spoke that evening, the House would know more distinctly how that matter stood. If there were an enormous increase of consumption, the calculation of the noble Lord might be correct; but if the highest duty regulated price, and price regulated consumption, there could not be, for some years to come, any increased consumption arising from this measure, however there might be from an increase of population, improvement of trade, and similar causes. He had himself made a calculation of the probable loss of revenue. Assuming that the quantity of colonial sugar retained for home consumption last year was 240,000 tons, and of foreign sugar 50,000; he had taken that quantity as the basis of his calculation, during the whole of the years to which the calculation applied. Comparing the duties which would have been received under the Bill of 1846, with those which would be receivable under that of 1848, he found that in the first year the loss would be 165,000*l.*; in the second year, 405,000*l.*; in the third year, 645,000*l.*; in the fourth year, 885,000*l.*; and in the fifth year, 935,000*l.* Now, these were very different sums from the 10,000*l.* and 40,000*l.* mentioned by the noble Lord. The noble Lord had, he supposed, fallen into the mistake of calculating the fall of duty on the smaller quantity, and none on the larger. It should, however, be borne in mind that by far the greater portion of the sugar consumed in this country was colonial sugar, the duty on which was, from the 5th of July next, to fall 1*s.* in each year. The loss of 1*s.* would begin next year on the whole 240,000 tons. On 50,000 tons there would be a gain of 1*s.* 6*d.* for the first year, but afterwards even on that amount the duty would begin to fall. The loss during the whole period would be 3,035,000*l.* Against that the Government had nothing to set but increased consumption; but unless the noble Lord could show that that increase would be a consequence of the measure under consideration, he had no right to take credit for it when speaking of the loss inflicted by his scheme on the country. For a Chancellor of the Exchequer in the position of the right. hon. Gentleman—who was at his wit's end, positively proposing, he believed, to bring forward another budget before the Session was over, doubting whether he should not impose further taxes on real property, and, in fact, in the greatest difficulty as to making both ends meet—for a Chancellor of the Exchequer placed in such circumstances—to agree to alter the Bill of 1846, which had produced such admirable results, both to the consumer and the revenue—appeared to his (Mr. Bright's) mind a piece of statesmanship so extraordinary, that he could not have believed that it would ever be witnessed either in that or any other House of Parliament. There was one point connected with the increase of this duty from 18*s.* 6*d.* to 20*s.*, to which he had previously called the attention of the right hon. Gentleman, and having as yet received no answer, he hoped to do so that evening. The right hon. Gentleman knew that he was sacrificing revenue by affording this increased protection to the West Indian colonies. With regard to the raising of the duty of 18*s.* 6*d.* to 20*s.*, he held that that was a most unstatesmanlike proceeding, and one for which no precedent could be found amongst the annual Sugar Bills of past years. In 1845 the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) gave the most ample notice of the alteration which he proposed, so as to prevent any one from being, as it were, entrapped. He (Mr. Bright) had two letters from a constituent of his who was very largely engaged in the importation of sugar. This gentleman said—

> "I at present know of orders for twenty-three cargoes of foreign sugar, based on the certainty of a reduction of 1*s.* 6*d.* being taken off the present duty in July."

He further said—

> "I have no doubt there are orders out for fifty, sixty, to eighty cargoes of foreign sugar, based on foreign duty being 18*s.* 6*d.* in July."

In the other letter this gentleman said—

> "You are aware that we are within two or three weeks of the time when foreign sugar was to be reduced 1*s.* 6*d.* per cwt., and, from the repeated declarations of Government, very large orders have been given, based on the faith that a reduction, early in July, would take place; and even since Lord John's last declaration, although not many days ago, I know of eight vessels having gone out to the Brazils in ballast for sugar, and previously very large orders had been sent out. Is it right that Government should break those engagements, which would be considered most dishonourable in individuals?"

He (Mr. Bright) knew another gentleman who, in the same belief, had ordered from 4,000 to 5,000 tons of sugar to arrive by the 5th of July, and he was to be called upon by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to pay 20*s.*, although the Act of 1846 said he should pay only 18*s.* 6*d.* Now, he thought it must have occurred to every Member who had listened to the speeches on the subject, that there never was a step taken in legislation so completely in the dark, or so much at variance with the statements brought forward as that now under discussion. The hon. Member for Westbury had afforded a remarkable example of sudden conversion on this subject. He must confess that he had sat at the feet of that hon. Gentleman as a Gamaliel in political economy, and that it was from him he had learnt somewhat of what he knew of these matters. The hon. Gentleman had not, he believed, the slightest idea that the measure would do any good. It was opposed to his writings, which were before the world, and known throughout the world, at least wherever political economy was studied. He had never heard two speeches more opposed than the last which the hon. Member made on that bench, and his last on the Ministerial bench. It was remarkable how a man's eyes were opened when he was in office. On this case of the West Indies all the doctors disagree. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford, in his balancing speech, seemed hardly to know what he wanted; but it was evident that one thing which he wanted was money. The hon. Chairman (Mr. Bernal) was not very much in favour of immigration, and he would observe that there was no Member of that House who had taken a more honourable course with regard to that question. All his speeches were characterised by a much more impartial tone than was observed by most men who had a personal interest in the question under discussion. The hon. Member for Leominster, again, did not appear to think that much benefit could be derived from immigration. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Tamworth had made a speech on the previous night, which he (Mr. Bright) did not hear, but which he had carefully read twice that day. In that speech there were some compliments to the West Indians, there were great compliments to the noble Lord (Lord George Bentinck), there was something said in favour of the consumers, and lastly there was a pat on the back for those Gentlemen who took some interest in the question of slavery. But the right hon. Gentleman gave no sanction to the Bill of the noble Lord. On the contrary, he proved most conclusively that the proposed remedy would not benefit the condition of the colonies. And while admitting that the colonial expenditure was much too great, he still thought it desirable to pay large sums for such admirable Governors as Lord Elgin and Lord Harris. The right hon. Gentleman doubted very much the benefit of importing negroes from Africa; and thought that the money to be thus employed should go in some other direction. The noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) was, however, opposed to giving money to improve the private estates of planters. He knew, in fact, that money had not done much good to Irish landowners, who were in precisely the same position as the planters of the West Indies; and that unless a good look-out was kept, it was likely to pass into the hands of mortgagees. The right hon. Gentleman had quoted Lord Howard de Walden; and he (Mr. Bright) did not doubt that that noble Lord knew something of the difficulties of proprietors. He also quoted a case in which, at an expenditure of 15,000*l.*, a tramroad might be constructed which would serve sixteen several estates. Why, then, was it not made? He ventured to say that the owner of one colliery in Durham would spend 15,000*l.* to obtain a good access to a neighbouring port. The right hon. Gentleman said he felt that protection would not afford the colonists any advantage. How then could he do otherwise than vote for his (Mr. Bright's) Amendment? In saying everything that he could say to damage and destroy the proposition of the hon. Member for Droitwich, the right hon. Gentleman had, in a degree, dealt in the same way with the proposition of the Government. The noble Lord at the head of the Government said that immigration had failed hitherto—first, that of Irishmen, and then that of Coolies; yet he asked the House to vote 500,000*l.* more for that respecting which the West Indians were divided in opinion, while half of them thought it would be highly injurious. The noble Lord also observed that a protection of 10*s.* would raise the wages of labour, and thus increase the evil which they desired to remove. If a protecting duty of 10*s.* would do that, one of 7*s.* would do the same in degree. Why did not the noble Lord leave those who held protectionist principles to fight their own battle? If the noble Lord were really a free-trader—a disciple of Adam Smith—a believer in the hon. Member for Westbury as he was before he came into office—he should adhere to free-trade principles, so that the House might know what they had to expect from the Government. He would not enter into further criticism on the noble Lord's speech, though many other parts of it were equally inconsistent. He did not, in fact, know where to find on either side of the House, any one who was really in favour of the measure. There were not, he believed, two hon. Members in the whole House who would in private say a syllable on its behalf. Had it dropped on the table, and had no one acknowledged the paternity, he believed that not two Gentlemen would have divided in its favour. He would sum up his view of the question in a few words. The noble Lord was proposing to depart from the measure of 1846 at the imminent risk of renewing discussions on other subjects. Let the principle of free trade be sound or not, it was agreed to in 1846 with regard to corn, sugar, and a great many articles of English manufacture: it was acted upon in accordance with the opinion of the vast majority of the British nation. Whether free trade were sound or not, at any rate let it have that trial which even its opponents said, being carried, it was right that it should have. The noble Lord had disturbed the settlement with regard to sugar, and before long he might be called upon to disturb another settlement. A Gentleman behind him cheered—the hon. Member for the North Riding of Yorkshire, who came into the House on the extraordinary and patriotic principle of keeping up the price of agricultural produce, corn, cheese, and butter, to a certain amount. He hoped the noble Lord would be more firm with regard to corn than he had been with regard to sugar; and if he were not, it was doubtful whether he would escape as he had done that morning, with a majority of 15. The noble Lord was at the head of a Government which was placed in an unfortunate position with regard to its finances. No blame to the noble Lord, no blame to the Chancellor of the Exchequer; they did not bring the famine, or destroy trade, and they were not responsible, therefore, for the falling off in the revenue. But it was for the noble Lord to consider well how he would make up the deficiency which already existed, rather than to increase that deficiency by an experiment which every body repudiated. Taking their stand on the platform of the Bill of 1846, with facts and arguments conclusive as to the value and wisdom of that measure, the Government might have defied the attacks both of the Protectionists on the one side, and the mistaken philanthropists on the other. By the course which they had pursued, however, they had given their opponents a vantage ground which would not easily be recovered; and it was because he believed that the measure would be pernicious both to this country and to the West Indies, that he had undertaken to move, and would now proceed to move, as an Amendment—

> "To leave out all the words from the word 'that' to the end of the first proposed resolution, in order to add these words, 'it is not now expedient to make any alteration in the Sugar Duties Act of 1846.'"

MR. G. BERKELEY, in rising to give his decided opposition to the Amendment of the hon. Member, thought it would become him to say a few words in defence of the planters and owners, whose interests had been lost sight of, and whose characters had been attacked by the hon. Member. That attack was most unfair; and he should be able to show the House that they were not at all in the position which had been so insultingly described by the hon. Member. But the hon. Member had a great habit of attacking anything for which he had not a fancy; he ran tilt at any measure, whether he understood its intricacies or not—and that was the opinion which the hon. Member's friends entertained of him. He would tell the House the opinion of the hon. Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire (Mr. Cobden). On one occasion, when the hon. Member for Manchester and he (Mr. G. Berkeley) were engaged together on a Committee, the hon. Member, using a method of expression not unusual with him, had told him (Mr. Berkeley) that when he was made a legislator a very good gamekeeper was spoilt. [Mr. BRIGHT: Poacher.] Whether poacher or gamekeeper it was the same thing; and, in consequence of it, he had asked the hon. Member whether he believed everything which the hon. Member for the West Riding said; to which the hon. Member replied, "I do." He had then asked the hon. Member whether he would pin his faith to every opinion of his hon. Friend the Member for the West Riding; to which the hon. Member also replied, "Yes;" and he then told the hon. Gentleman that his hon. Friend had told him (Mr. G. Berkeley), that so great were the pugnacious qualities of the hon. Member that, in his (Mr. Cobden's) opinion, if he were not a Quaker he would have been a prize-fighter. He would now inform the House what was the condition of that part of the West Indies with which he was particularly connected. He possessed six estates in British Guiana; and from the time of negro emancipation to that hour they had ceased to give any return. Unfortunately, these estates were under the Dutch law; and by that law, if he neglected to keep up the roads, bridges, and canals, the local government were empowered to do any repairs, and to sell his estates for the payment of the expenses, though these estates had been originally purchased by his family for 100,000*l*. It seemed to him very hard that they should be under the Dutch law at all; but that was a small part of the hardship they had to endure. The House was now attempting to legislate in reference to the Island colonies and the Continent colonies in the same way, and yet the two were as different as land from water. In the Island colonies, surrounded by the sea, the labouring population were necessarily more under control; but on the Continent it was absolutely impossible to compel any one to work. One month's work would supply a labourer for twelvemonths with the vegetable productions which he required. There was no limit as to space. They had rivers to fish in, and game to kill, for no laws prevented them from sporting. Under such circumstances, any idea of compelling them to work was out of the question. He had abandoned sugar cultivation, because it did not pay;

and then he was told that they were a colony of bankrupts. They were so, but that result had been produced by the legislation of that House; and he implored them, if they desired to retain these colonies, to give them protection, without which the 500,000*l.* would be like money thrown into the sea. It would only give to their enemies additional reason for saying as they had said with regard to the 20,000,000*l.*, "We have bought you." The hon. Member for Manchester had referred to that compensation as it was called; but what was it? His estates had produced from 3,000*l.* to 7,000*l.* a year, and generally produced from 3,000*l.* to 5,000*l.* a year; he had received from this country, by way of compensation, 14,000*l.*; but since that time his estates had produced nothing. Could they say, then, that they had bought that estate—for which he had given 100,000*l.*? He would read to the House a letter from his agent in Guiana, in May last, on that subject. It was in reply to a letter of his (Mr. Berkeley's) inquiring into the condition of his estates. The agent says—

> "I am sorry I am not able to realise your wishes for better news. Truly has Mr. Barkly (the hon. Member for Leominster) described the state of your once splendid property as being in a dreadfully neglected condition. A like description would answer for full half the colony; and even in the immediate neighbourhood of George Town, the abandonment of estates is fast becoming general, the cultivated ones being rapidly given up. The colony is certainly in an awful condition. I fear that many other proprietors must be added to the list, wherein your name occupies so predominant a place, of once wealthy owners of estates ruined by cruel legislation."

The hon. Member for Manchester stated that the planters were never satisfied. Since he came into that House they had very little reason to be satisfied; and at the present moment, when the country seemed about to awake from its long sleep on the question, and inclined to make some effort at a remedy, the hon. Member interfered to prevent any remedial measure being carried. They were told that whatever was proposed could do them very little good—that Providence was against them—that they were ruined by their own extravagance; though, certainly, he was not aware of any particular extravagance being chargeable upon any person with whom he was acquainted in the colonies. He was quite convinced that, as far as regarded British Guiana, emancipation had been the foundation of their ruin. He would just give the House an instance of the manner in which the negroes had since conducted themselves, by a statement of what had occurred with reference to the last crop of sugar which he had attempted to make. When the canes were ripe, the labourers on his estate came to his attorney, and said that if he did not give them an enormous bonus, they would not cut the crop. The attorney did make the advance demanded; and when the canes were cut, and brought to the door of the sugar-house, the labourers said that if they had not another bonus, the canes should not be boiled. This second bonus was, of course, refused, and the whole crop was lost. He begged the House not only to give the colonists protection, but to pass more stringent laws against vagrancy, and to permit a full and free immigration, which had never yet been fairly tried. The colonists could have had, long before this, a free immigration of Kroomen, if they had not been hampered by the absurd regulations which had been enforced. Instead of letting them come the shortest way, it was insisted upon that they should go first to Sierra Leone; and when they went away from Guiana, if they had saved any money, they had to travel through the territories of tribes hostile to them, who robbed them of the money which they had saved. The House had been told by the right hon. Member for Tamworth, that ultimately slavery must be abolished; but what were the West Indies to do while this great change was taking place? In the meantime the whole of our colonies might be ruined. He trusted that the House would reject the Motion of the hon. Member for Manchester, and that the next packet would carry out better news than the last.

MR. BAGSHAW had told the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) what would be the result of his Committee, and he was not, therefore, surprised at the present proposition of the Government. For his own part he was opposed, not only to the recommendation of the Committee, but also to the scheme of the Government, and the Motion of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Bright). He believed, that if they gave the British agriculturist of the tropics the same protection which they gave to the British corn-grower in this country, that he would be able to grow sugar profitably; and at all events, as a free-trader, he would ask for no other protection. He was quite aware that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Tamworth had said, that by any measure of protection which they might propose, they would be giving the same advantage to India and to the Mauritius which they were giving to the West Indies; and certainly India had some claim upon us for those advantages. He could not but recollect, as regarded India, that we had by our manufactures entirely supplanted the manufactures of that country; and when he recollected the distress that had thereby been occasioned in India, he could not but acknowledge that India had some claim on us. We had prohibited the introduction of their manufactures into this country except at a very high rate of duty, and we had forced them to take our manufactures at a comparatively low rate of duty. The *Friend of India*, a work of authority on all matters that regarded our Indian empire, had set forth this subject fully. From that work it appeared that in the year 1817 the value of cotton manufactured goods annually exported from this country to India was 30,000*l.*, while in 1842 and 1843 it was upwards of 2,000,000*l.* sterling; but in proportion as British goods had made progress in the Indian markets, so had the import of Indian manufactured goods into the British market decreased. In 1817, the value of cotton goods exported from India to England was 1,659,400*l.*—in 1843, the value was 16,000*l.* only; and 1847 would hereafter be memorable in the annals of commerce as the first year in which the exportation of piece-goods from India to England had entirely ceased. In that year the value of British piece-goods imported into Calcutta was upwards of 3,000,000*l.* sterling; and not a single yard of Indian cotton manufacture had been sent to England. Eighteen years ago, the city of Dacca carried on a vast and profitable manufacturing trade—Dacca manufactures to the value of 2,000,000*l.* sterling were exported from Calcutta. Now, not a single piece of goods of Indian manufacture was exported; a vast and profitable trade had been entirely extinguished, and grass was growing in the streets of Dacca. The East Indies had, therefore, a just claim upon this country for every advantage that could possibly be afforded them in respect of that trade which had supplanted the cotton manufacture in that country. With respect to the article of sugar—the value of the sugar imported into this country from India, in the years 1835 and 1836, had amounted only to 160,000*l.*; last year it had amounted to 1,500,000*l.* sterling; and there could be no doubt but that India would shortly be able, if necessary, to supply the whole of this country with sugar. In 1834 no sugar had been exported from India to this country; but no sooner had the permission for the importation of sugar from India been granted, than machinery of every kind had been exported, a large amount of capital had been invested in sugar cultivation, and from that time the export of sugar to this country had commenced. But in 1844, all this trade had been checked and nearly destroyed by the measure permitting the introduction of foreign free-labour sugar. It was the measure of 1844 that had ruined the British colonial sugar cultivation, and not the measure of 1846. He believed that the Government had been compelled to pass the measure of 1846, because they had found themselves, by the measure of 1844, placed in a dilemma, from which they could not extricate themselves. Shortly after that Act had passed, a cargo of sugar was introduced from some of the friendly States of South America with which we had commercial treaties, which we had been forced to admit; whereupon an application had been made by the Spanish Government to be admitted to the same privilege, and they were compelled to pass the measure of 1846 to extricate themselves from this dilemma. Every merchant must be aware, that for every pound of foreign free-labour sugar we took from the Continental market, a pound of slave-labour sugar went into the foreign market to fill up the vacuum. The Act of 1844 did more mischief than the Act of 1846. During the last four years, the amount of sugar imported from the British colonies had been 950,000 tons—the consumption had been 918,000 tons. There had been more than sufficient imported to supply the consumption; but in addition there had been a great quantity of foreign sugar imported, and every ton of foreign sugar introduced into the market had tended to derange the price, and that had been the sole cause of the distress for the last four years. He should wish them to adopt the free-trade principle, and to carry it out. When the agitation was going on for the repeal of the corn laws, the farmers and landowners were told, "You will always have a large amount of protection in the additional cost which the foreigner must ever pay to bring his corn to the British market;" and that was the protection which the British agriculturist in this country enjoyed under a system of free trade; and certainly the British agriculturist in the tropics was equally entitled to the same protection. He did not approve of any temporary measure: he approved not of the measure proposed by the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn, neither did he approve of the measure of the Government; he thought that taking the protection enjoyed by the British agriculturist as a precedent, the West Indian sugar-grower was entitled to a permanent protection of 5*s.* Such a protection was not sufficient to induce idleness on the part of the protected, and by being permanent it would not cause fluctuations in the market. Sugar, he thought, was a very fair subject of taxation for the purposes of revenue. It was a duty easily collected, and which could be evaded with difficulty; and he therefore should propose that the duty on all foreign sugar should henceforth be 19*s.*, and that on British colonial sugar should be 14*s.*

Mr. J. TOLLEMACHE very rarely indeed troubled the House with any observations, and it was with great reluctance that he did so now; but as his evidence before the Committee had been referred to by more than one Gentleman, he begged to say a word or two on that subject. He would not weary the House by going over the various points on which he gave his evidence, and which had been gone over by the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck), to whom the country was under great obligations for the manner in which he had treated this question. He could say, with truth, that in giving that evidence his anxious desire was to present a candid and fair statement, and to withhold nothing from the Committee, not even that which he knew would be agreeable to those Gentlemen with whom he differed on the subject of free-trade opinions. He was most anxious that the Committee should be afforded every opportunity of arriving at the truth, and at sound and correct opinions; and he was also anxious that those West India proprietors who resided in this country should be made acquainted with the manner in which he had reduced his expenditure in the West Indies. He told the Committee that he had found in the West Indies a bad and expensive system prevalent; and that if the West India proprietors would act vigorously in reducing their cost of production, they could effect much. He told them he had succeeded in doing so to such an extent as to reduce his cost of production from 17*s.* 7*d.* a cwt. to 15*s.*; and that he did not despair by carrying on with vigour a more economical system, aided by protection, of reducing his cost of production even below the sum he had named. He knew that this part of his evidence was complained of by Gentlemen connected with the West Indian interest. Indeed, an esteemed friend of his having property in Antigua had stated that sugar could not be produced at 15*s.* a cwt. either on his (Mr. Tollemache's) estate or on his own. He had, however, made no statement to the Committee that he was not able to substantiate. Decided protectionist as he avowed himself to be, and holding that every interest in this country required protection, he was not an advocate for giving high protection to the West Indies, for he believed it would interfere most materially with the efforts making to reduce the cost of production. The hon. Member for Westbury, at the commencement of the Session—certainly not in his last speech—told them many wonders about beetroot sugar. He should be very much surprised if that hon. Gentleman told them much more upon that subject, for he was a man of too much intelligence not by this time to be assured that sugar could be produced in the West Indies cheaper than in any other part of the world. He thought it important that the people of this country should know that fact, and be made aware that if they wanted cheap and an abundant supply of sugar, it was to the West Indies they must look for it. He thought it anything but desirable that sugar should be kept up at a very high price in this country. In the first place, it encouraged a bad and expensive system of management, while high prices forced production elsewhere, and raised up a host of competitors, such as the hon. Gentleman's beetroot friends. Without high prices such sugar producers would never be heard of; therefore he was opposed to a high protection to the West India colonies, as being unfair to this country, and injurious to the interest of every class connected with the West Indies. But though he should object to any very high and excessive protection, still he was thoroughly satisfied that free labour never could compete with slave labour, and that a certain amount of protection was absolutely necessary to save the colonies from complete ruin, and the people of this country from being dependent for sugar—for which, in the end, they would have very very dearly to pay—upon Cuba, Brazil, and other countries where slavery existed. There were few West India proprietors who were more favourably circumstanced than himself. He possessed five estates in the West Indies, and he was very fortunate in his agents and tenants. He had considerably reduced the cost of production, and he believed he could reduce it still further. Besides this, he was prepared to incur a certain degree of loss rather than desert the people on estates which had been in his family upwards of a century. Nevertheless he felt he should be compelled to throw up his estates unless he was protected against slavery. He asked to be protected against nothing else. If he were to be asked what he believed would be a sufficient protection, he should say—at least as far as Barbadoes, Antigua, St. Vincent, St. Kitt's, and other islands were concerned—that 7*s.* would be a sufficient protection. But, taking the West Indies as a whole, he believed that a protecting duty of 10*s.* for two years; then to be reduced to 8*s.*; and after that to 6*s.*, where it might remain as long as slavery existed—for he repeated that free labour never could compete with slave labour—that, he thought, would be an adequate, but not more than an adequate, protection. He assured the Government that he felt no hostile feeling towards them whatever. Whenever he voted against them, it was with regret. Nevertheless, he last night felt it his duty to vote for the Amendment of the hon. Member for Droitwich. The Government were evidently dissatisfied with their measure of 1846; otherwise why propose a change? It had ruined the colonies; it had increased to an extraordinary extent the slave trade as regarded Brazil; and as regarded Cuba it had positively revived, the slave trade, which in that island, previous to 1846, had ceased altogether. He, therefore, prayed the Government again to consider this question. He believed the extent of protection he had named would enable the West India proprietors to exert themselves in cultivating their estates with success, and would secure to the people of this country an abundant and, in the end, a cheap supply of sugar. It would give to the population of the colonies employment, and would improve their social and moral condition; and finally, it would rescue this country from the charge of inconsistency, and from that disgrace under which it now laboured by pursuing a system which increased the slave trade as regarded Brazil, and which actually revived it as regarded Cuba. For these reasons he could not support the resolution proposed by the Government.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I think the Committee are indebted to the hon. Gentleman in the chair for having called upon the hon. Member for South Cheshire (Mr. Tollemache), who has just sat down, and of whose speech I am sure it is no undeserved compliment to say that it wholly confirms the effect which I am sure his evidence would produce upon the mind of anybody who would read it. The hon. Gentleman has given some most valuable and straightforward evidence before the Committee so ably presided over by the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord G. Bentinck), and has laid before the public many truths of the highest importance to be known. For my own part, differing as I do in some respects from him, I can assure the hon. Gentleman that no opinions have been expressed by any Gentleman which, in my judgment, are entitled to more consideration than those which he has now placed before us. But both he and the hon. Gentleman who spoke immediately before him, have advocated the principle of a permanent protection to the West India sugar. In this respect I differ with both those hon. Gentlemen, because, even in the report of the Committee itself, it is shown that the Members of it looked to a cessation of protection before any long period. The recommendation of the Committee was, that a certain amount of protection should be afforded for a term of six years. In the resolution moved in the Committee by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge, it is stated that it was to the power of limiting the expense and the amount of production by which the West India proprietors may be able to compete with foreign producers, that they must look for ultimate prosperity to the colonies, rather than to protecting duties. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth pointed out last night that which is notorious to all persons conversant with the sugar interests of the colonies, that, even when those colonies enjoyed by law the monopoly of the market in this country, a very slight production beyond that which this country could consume brought them into competition with foreign-grown sugar in the European markets; the effect of which was to produce a very considerable reduction in the price of the sugar market, not only on the Continent, but in England also, and great suffering was consequently entailed upon the colonies. By the evidence before the Committee it is clear that the production of sugar in the West Indies is at this moment very nearly equal to the existing consumption in this country. Should there be any excess of production, that will immediately bring the West Indian proprietors into competition with the slave-grown sugar market, with which they can only successfully compete by being able to produce as good and as cheap sugar as their competitors. Whether my hon. Friend the Member for Harwich (Mr. Bagshaw), who avows himself an ardent free-trader, will be able to persuade his friends who are strenuous free-trade advocates to assent to a permanent protective duty in favour of colonial sugar, I will not hazard even a guess; but it will be time enough for me to address myself to that proposition when my hon. Friend shall have succeeded in converting his friends to his own particular views upon the subject. In the meanwhile I will make some observations as briefly as possible upon the proposition before the House — namely, that the Legislature ought not in any respect to depart from the principle of the Bill of 1846. In the first place, I may observe that this proposition is diametrically opposed to the Motion upon which the House divided last night. The complaint of those who divided against the Government last night was, that we did not do enough for the West India proprietors; whereas the question raised by the hon. Member for Manchester to-night, in a speech of considerable ability, and in a great part of which I concur, is, that we are doing too much for the West Indies. It is an advantage which those hon. Gentleman always possess who admit of no qualifying circumstances to influence their judgments, but rigidly abide by their principle, to be able to reproach those who, while recognising the same principle, so far differ from them as to allow circumstances to modify the application of that principle. The former can always taunt the latter with a dereliction of the principle which they profess. The state of circumstances to which I allude, is, in point of fact, a state of transition from the principle of protection to that of free trade. It is an anomalous state of things, and renders a compromise for a time between those two principles absolutely necessary. It is utterly impossible, for a time at least, that either principle shall predominate. We are now passing through this transition state; and a temporary compromise has been found the best mode of effecting an adjustment between those two principles, and of preventing that opposition which would arise were any effort made to enforce the predominance of either the one or the other. That was the principle of the Act of 1846, which allowed temporarily a certain diminishing protection to the West India colonies; and that is the principle of the measure we now propose, although it does so far depart from the Act of 1846 by affording a higher extent of protection to the West India proprietors. The hon. Member for Manchester has reproached me for having said in February that I was not prepared to depart from the Act of 1846. I do not deny that in February that was my opinion; but I should be ashamed to stand here and under all circumstances maintain an opinion I had previously expressed, and to say that I am not open to conviction notwithstanding any evidence which may be brought before me—that I am literally deaf to all the information I might have obtained. I will not refer to the circumstances advanced by those who advocate a certain amount of protection, because I should be repeating what has been already stated by the Committee, who have declared their opinion that by a strict adherence to the Act of 1846 the most disastrous and calamitous consequences would ensue. I would rather refer to the statement which the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Tollemache) has just made. He says that he is adverse to any high protection of the planter, because it would interfere with the cost of production. The hon. Member for Gloucester (Mr. Grantley Berkeley) has mentioned the number of estates that are in the course of abandonment, and it must be obvious to all that the application of an extreme system of protection, joined with other circumstances to which I will advert presently, has spread a degree of alarm and apprehension in the West Indies which must be prejudicial not only to the West Indian proprietors themselves, but to the consumers in this country. Now, it is impossible to deny that the state of commercial distress which prevailed in this country last year has produced most mischievous consequences in the West Indies. One large bank has failed in one of the principal islands, and the whole present distress which prevails in Barbadoes, in Trinidad, and in British Guiana, has apparently arisen from the failure of that bank, and can by no means be attributed to the Act of 1846, or to the competition with slave-grown sugar. Another circumstance which has seriously aggravated the distress is, that question which I mentioned on a former occasion, namely, the impossibility which the colonies experience in raising loans for agricultural purposes. Under these circumstances I confess I think the Government were bound to step forward—charged as they are with the interest of the whole colonies—and to make an attempt, if possible, to arrest the progress of the abandonment of the estates, and the destruction of the proprietors, with which they were threatened for want of credit. I think, Sir, my hon. Friend behind me is not quite just in his observation that we have entirely omitted all consideration of the interests of the consumer in this country. My noble Friend (Lord J. Russell), when he first opened this matter to the House, stated very fully how far the interests of the consumer were concerned in preserving the cultivation of the West Indies. We do believe that we have framed a measure in which (while it offers advantages to the West Indies of very considerable extent, though far short of what we would willingly obtain for them) we have not been unmindful of the interests of the consumer. I conceive if we had given a higher protection we should have interfered with the process now going on in the West Indies of reducing the cost of production by diminishing the price of wages. I will not again repeat the argument on that point; I could not state it more clearly or forcibly than it has been by the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down. The object we have had in view is, by a temporary protection, to induce parties to continue the cultivation of their estates, and at the same time not to interfere with that on which their prosperity so much depends—the reduction of the cost of cultivation by diminishing the wages of labour. I do not pretend to defend this measure on the principles of a free-trader. No one is more entirely convinced than I am of the soundness of those principles; and no one is more opposed than I am to any proposition for the maintenance of a permanent system of protection. The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Bright) has truly stated that the Act of 1846 has been most successful both as regards the revenue and the interests of the consumer. There can be no doubt of the accuracy of that testimony borne by the hon. Gentleman to the operation of the measure introduced by Her Majesty's Government; and certainly, if I was not convinced by the best consideration I could give to the subject, that the interests of the West Indies and the consumer were alike concerned in maintaining the cultivation of estates in the West Indies, I should have been the last man to depart from the Act with whose operation we have had just cause to be satisfied. I do not know whether it is the intention of any one to propose an Amendment to carry into effect the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford; at all events, I will reserve any observations I may have to make till that shall be done. But I wish now to make some observations on that part of the subject which concerns the revenue, the most important of all the considerations we have now before us; because I quite agree that, under present circumstances, the object of primary importance is that no serious injury should be done to the revenue of the country by any measure we propose. Now, Sir, by the measure we propose, no doubt we run some risk of losing revenue—I don't think much; but I cannot quite admit the doctrine maintained by the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn, that the proposal for reducing the duty on colonial sugar to 10*s.* per cwt., and maintaining a duty of 20*s.* per cwt. on foreign sugar, is a measure less dangerous to the revenue than that which the Government propose. The recommendation of the Committee entails, at any rate, a first loss of 960,000*l.*; the plan of the Government will entail a first loss of 240,000*l.* Now, it is quite true that the risk of loss run will be made up by increased consumption *pro tanto* on the sum of 960,000*l.*; but, inasmuch as it is far easier to make up the loss of 240,000*l.* than the loss of 960,000*l.*, I think it must be admitted that the risk to the revenue run is not so great in the one case as in the other. The additional loss is 720,000*l.* beyond the utmost risk to be encountered on the plan of the Government; and though I cannot admit that the principal of the loan of 500,000*l.* can be charged against the revenue of the first year, yet, even if it could be, still the loss under the Government scheme would not be more than 220,000*l.* This would at once appear from these figures :—

First loss on Lord G. Bentinck's proposition	£960,000
First loss on the Government scheme	240,000
Showing a greater loss under the former of	720,000
Deduct the loan	500,000
Entire loss	£220,000

I cannot anticipate that the increased consumption, if so much, will do more than make up the loss of revenue. We may incur a small loss of revenue under our scheme; but the loss under that of the noble Lord would be no less than 720,000*l.* Of course, the risk to the revenue arises from the loss of duty by reducing the colonial duty from 14*s.* to 13*s.* the first year; and the prospect of that being made up arises from the increased consumption we hope will take place in the course of the year. I quite admit that I do not look to any increased consumption in the course of the first year in consequence of this measure. I never said I did. When I formerly referred to this point, I stated most distinctly on what ground it was I did anticipate an increased consumption in the course of the year. Speaking generally, owing to the large stock of sugar there is on hand in this country, the prospect of a very good crop in the colonies, and anticipating, whatever may be the case in future years, that this year the planters will be prepared to take off the existing crops, so far as my information goes, there can be no great falling-off this year. It is a remarkable fact, as my hon. Friend the Under Secretary for the Colonies stated, that, even with the amount of panic in Jamaica, of which we heard so much in this House, the production last year is greater than at any time since 1840. What is the probability of an increased consumption in the course of the next year? I estimate the probable increase at about 15,000 to 20,000 tons. Referring to the statement contained in the resolutions moved by the noble Lord in the Committee—referring to the consumption of former years, even with no diminution of duty, with no extraneous circumstances to account for increased consumption, but taking the average of all those years without an increase of duty, we might calculate upon a consumption of sugar in the course of the year ending the 31st of December, 1848, of 328,000 tons. One of the resolutions of the noble Lord, alluding to the experience of former years, states the belief that 325,000 tons of sugar may be taken as the probable consumption of sugar for the year ending the 5th July, 1849. That is a fair deduction from the figures quoted in the 22nd page of the noble Lord's draught resolutions. The year 1847 was clearly a most exceptional case, because the importation of sugar in the first quarter was extraordinary, owing to the anticipated permission to brew and distil from sugar; it formed no criterion for future years; and therefore the circumstance alluded to by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford, of the small comparative increase of sugar imported in the first four months of this year, compared with last year, is not to be taken as on index with reference to the remaining three quarters of the year. If I had taken the estimate deduced from the figures, I should have taken the consumption at 325,000 tons. I think that is probably beyond the mark. I estimate it, for myself, at from 305,000 tons to 310,000 tons; and I must say, if we look at the increased consumption of former years, I don't think I have any reason to fear that an increased consumption to that extent may not take place. In the last five years, comparing the consumption of 1847 with 1842, I find that the quantity of sugar entered for home consumption was—

1847	288,975 tons
1842	193,422 tons
Showing an increase in five years of no less than	95,553 tons.

A return called for the other day shows, even among a people not usually having any command over the luxuries of life, how the consumption of sugar has extended in Ireland. I find that in the last four years the consumption of Ireland has increased from 352,302 cwt. in 1843, to 596,606 cwt. in 1847. If, then, I were to take the consumption of sugar as stated in the noble Lord's resolutions, and his estimate of the proportion between colonial and foreign sugar, as accurate, we should have 225,000 tons colonial sugar, and 85,000 tons foreign, which would give a revenue of 4,625,000*l.*, or 284,000*l.* above that received last year. But this estimate, I think, is too high. I do, however, think I may safely calculate on a consumption from 305,000 tons to 310,000 tons. Now, Sir, the amount of revenue from this source will depend upon whether that increase is on colonial or foreign sugar. If there be an increase on the former to the extent of 15,000 tons, the present alteration will entail loss, which I hold to be the maximum of 45,000*l.* If the increase consist of 10,000 tons colonial, and 5,000 tons foreign, then the total loss will amount only to 10,000*l.* If the consumption should be 310,000, then even if the whole consisted of colonial sugar the revenue would be improved by 20,000*l.* If 15,000 tons were colonial and 5,000 foreign, there would be a gain to the revenue of 55,000*l.* It is impossible to say what the consumption may be; but I have good grounds for anticipating that the maximum loss cannot be more than 45,000*l.*; and I have reason, indeed, to believe that there will be no loss at all. In future years I look for a very large consumption from the diminution of price—a diminution which will not be effected by any other plan than ours, because we propose to reduce year after year the duty on foreign sugar; and it is by the price of foreign sugar, affected as it will be by the reduction of duty, that the price of sugar will be regulated. Providing for a continuous diminution of the duty year after year, we hope for a continuous increase of consumption; and by that diminution of duty not only will the consumer be benefited, but it is to that diminution that the producer must look for the improvement of his condition. It is to a smaller return on a larger quantity of produce that the West Indians must look for a return of prosperity. Although in some respects this is not perhaps the most appropriate opportunity, yet as so much has been said as to the effect of the proposition made by Her Majesty's Government on the revenue, and the probability of loss to which we may be exposed, and still more as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford distinctly referred to the subject, observing that it was right Parliament should have some earnest of what the Government were doing for the purpose of equalising the income and expenditure of the country within the year—a wish which it was very natural for him to express, which it was very natural for the House to entertain when asked to adopt a measure which might probably entail some loss to the revenue—I shall not hesitate on the present occasion, in compliance with the suggestion, to state in general terms, without entering into details, what are the prospects with regard to the revenue and expenditure which we think we may entertain for the current year. The right hon. Gentleman referred to a statement of my noble Friend early in the year on the subject of the estimates. What is material for the present year is the expenditure of the current year as compared with the income. At that time we had a deficiency of about 2,000,000*l.* The object of the Government was to equalise the income and expenditure by increased taxation. The House showed a general indisposition to concur in any proposition of that kind, and I need not say the subject occupied the most anxious attention of the Government from that time to this. I also wish to say that, looking to the income and expenditure of former years, I find the income of last year was fully as high, and higher, than that of the previous year. The income for 1846–47 was very truly described by the right hon. Member for the University of Oxford as a year of extraordinary receipts. But so applicable was the same remark to the income of last year, that the state of our finances in 1847–48 was actually higher than in 1846–47, after the great reductions which had been made. But the average expenditure of the three preceding years gives an amount of expenditure far below what was proposed for last year or the preceding year; and therefore I think it was the bounden duty of Government and of Parliament to take measures with a view to a reduction of expenditure. Two Committees were appointed for that purpose; but none of us thought, that in appointing those Committees we should shift from our own shoulders the responsibility which devolves upon the Government. It is impossible to reduce the expenditure necessary to maintain the efficiency of the forces, or to carry on those works which having been commenced, it would be still worse to abandon. The noble Lord stated the Miscellaneous Estimates at 4,006,000*l.*; the amount laid on the table was 3,771,000*l.*, being a reduction of 235,000*l.* With respect to the Army, the expenditure so depended on the numerical force, that the House, having decided that there should be no reduction in the forces, there could be no reduction in the expenditure. The noble Lord stated that it was intended to propose an additional vote for militia; but that proposition had been abandoned, so that there is a diminution in the estimates under that head of 150,000*l.* Without injuring the efficiency of the Navy and the Ordnance, we are satisfied that on those two services within the year a reduction of 300,000*l.* may be effected. My hon. Friend the Secretary of the Admiralty stated, that on the Naval Estimates a much larger reduction might be effected within the ensuing year; but the existing contracts must, necessarily, postpone such reduction for the present. But the effect of the various reductions is, to diminish the estimates of expenditure to the amount of 685,000*l.* I do not mean to say that works may not cease to be prosecuted with which, otherwise, it would be desirable to proceed; but, in the circumstances of the country, it seems advisable that they should be postponed, and that reductions should so far be effected on the expenditure for the present. I have postponed any statement on this subject because it requires considerable time to go through all the details. I hope further reductions may be effected within the year. But, all that I feel confident of—and of that I do feel confident—is, that a reduction to the amount I have stated may be effected. I was also anxious to postpone my statement until a late period of the Session, because then the state of the Exchequer and the extent of the expenditure would be better understood. The revenue from Customs has been maintained; from Excise is improved; but from Stamps and Taxes lowered. I find myself quite justified in anticipating an increase of revenue beyond what I anticipated in February to the extent of 350,000*l.* The usual practice has not been to include the receipt from corn, and I leave out of the calculation that incidental source of revenue. Then, there is a sum to be received on what are commonly called " appropriations in aid." It has been for some time in contemplation to effect a measure for applying the receipts on this account to the service of the current year, instead of reserving them to the end of the financial year, to be then applied in diminution of the votes for the ensuing year. Some delay has occurred in effecting this object, in consequence of the supposition being entertained that an Act of Parliament was necessary to permit it; but it has been found out that the Act of Parliament which prohibited the operation is repealed. No obstacle, therefore, now exists, and I have directed the sums produced by the sale of old stores, &c., which make up the amount known as " appropriations in aid," to be paid directly into the Exchequer, and therefore the receipts from that source for the year will be applicable to the service of the year. The amount I estimate at 500,000*l.*, that of last year being about 430,000*l.* This is only a temporary source of income, to be sure, but it can be made fairly applicable to the service of the year. The result then of the whole is a diminution in the estimated excess of expenditure over revenue of 1,535,000*l.*, and therefore, as things stand, instead of our having an excess of expenditure over revenue of 2,000,000*l.*, the probable amount will not exceed 500,000*l.* I think that the House ought to be in possession of this information. Both here and out of doors considerable anxiety has been felt upon the subject, and even those hon. Gentlemen who approved of the proposals of Government, thought that considerable reductions in our expenditure might be made. I can only add that we have turned our most unremitting attention to the subject, and thus have been able to hold out the prospect of the reductions which I have mentioned—reductions, I repeat, which will be made within the year, and of the increased produce of those sources of revenue to which I have also referred. It may be again my duty to return to this subject. In the meantime, I have only to congratulate hon. Gentlemen upon our prospects being more promising than they perhaps expected—an announcement, too, which I cannot but think will be deemed satisfactory to the House and the country at large.

MR. HASTIE said, it appeared to him that, in abandoning that system of protection which had prevailed in this country for the last two hundred years, they ought to proceed with caution, and give the parties interested timely notice of the changes they might propose. He might, as a specimen of what had been done by hasty legislation, refer to the cotton manufacture once so extensive in India, and to the measures which, by stopping that manufacture, had been productive of vast injury to the native manufacturers. Great commercial changes should always be conducted with the utmost caution. He wished the House to understand what was at present the exact position of the West Indian colonies, as importers and consumers of British manufactures, as compared with Brazil and Cuba, in the same character. He would first take the average yearly consumption of our manufactures in the British West Indies during the last seven years, and then the quantity consumed in the same period by Brazil and Cuba. In this way the House would be able to judge of the value of the colonies, and the caution which they ought to exercise in legislating for them. During the seven years ending 1847, it appeared that the average annual value of our manufactures exported to the British West Indies, was upwards of 2,700,000*l.*; whilst to Brazil it was 1,300,000*l.*, and to Cuba, 650,000*l.* Now, the West Indian interest stated, that if the Bill of 1846 were allowed to be carried out, at least one-half of the sugar plantations in those islands would go out of cultivation. And, surely, if one-half of the estates went out of cultivation, it was but natural to suppose, that one-half the exports, or half the sum of 2,700,000*l.* would be lost; and with the cessation of that amount of exports, but one half the present quantity of sugar should come from the islands. And as the Mauritius were nearly in the same position as the West Indies, the result would be, that upwards of 100,000 tons of sugar annually would be withdrawn from the home market, and a rise in price take place to the consumer of at least from 5*l.* to 7*l.* a ton. Thus the measure of 1846 would cut two ways—first, there would be a material loss of manufactures, and next a dearer price for sugar. But suppose, that by taking the extra quantity of sugar from Brazil and Cuba, we induced them to take the manufactures which the colonies now required, still there must be a loss of British capital in the colonies, whilst no corresponding advantage could ensue to this country. He denied, however, that that would be the effect, or that the same quantity of British goods would be exported to Brazil and Cuba as now went to Jamaica. The relative social state of the colonies, and Brazil and Cuba, sufficiently accounted for this. It was a curious fact, that the exports to the West Indies had considerably increased since the Emancipation Act, although the quantity of their produce had considerably diminished. But this was not to be wondered at, when it was borne in mind that the inhabitants had formerly been slaves, with scarcely a rag to cover them; and that subsequently to the measure of emancipation they were in the receipt of regular wages, and clothed themselves, their wives, and children, in articles of British manufacture. He preferred the proposition of Her Majesty's Government to the continuance of the Act of 1846, as proposed by the hon. Member for Manchester, for he was satisfied that the former would do much to save the colonists from ruin, and their estates from going out of cultivation, and at the same time preserve to this country the exports of its manufactures; while it would not increase the price to the consumer, it would give the West Indies a differential duty of 5*s.* 6*d.* for three years, besides affording facilities for the introduction of labour.

Mr. CARDWELL, as one of those who anticipated at the time of the passing of the Bill of 1846, the consequences which it would inflict on the West India colonies, and the results to which it would lead as connected with the slave trade, had come down as a spectator to-night, curious to see how the hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the author of the measure, would defend himself against the taunts of his Friend and patron the hon. Member for Manchester. The right hon. Gentleman had not indeed gratified his curiosity in that respect. The right hon. Gentleman took some credit for his great openness to conviction, expressed his opinion that it was an element of statesmanship not to adhere inflexibly to unbending principles, but to give way to qualifying circumstances, and to arrange the measures to be taken according to the altering circumstances and pressure of the times. But how the circumstances of the West Indies had altered since the 8th of February, or since the 30th of May, so as to require a revolution in the legislation to be applied to them, the right hon. Gentleman left the House to conjecture. Still, however, the right hon. Gentleman had made a speech more interesting than could be any series of Parliamentary repartees dealt out to the hon. Member for Manchester; the right hon. Gentleman had, in fact, given them a second budget; and not only that, but he had admitted that the second budget was not satisfactory, and solemnly promised us that at a very early opportunity we should be treated to a third. Now, he understood why the right hon. Gentleman, although not prepared to give us the whole of his budget, did not think that he ought to allow this debate to go on without shadowing out some indications of it. The right hon. Gentleman was bountiful in dealing with the budget of 1854; and in proposing to deal with the consumption of sugar, which was now upwards of 300,000 tons, his proposition was to remove from that consumption in 1854 no less a sum than 4*l.* a ton, which was equal to a gross sum of 1,200,000*l.* He was not surprised that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had taken the precaution to guard himself from the taunt which might be thrown on him of making such a hole in the budget of 1854, and he had therefore favoured the House with some idea of the budget of 1848. He considered they had great cause to congratulate themselves on the reluctance which the right hon. Gentleman had shown to replace the 2,000,000 of deficiency by increased taxation, for without increased taxation, or necessity for exertion, no less a sum than 1,500,000*l.* had disappeared from the estimates under the head of deficiency. He hoped that the House was satisfied with the details of this diminished budget, although he confessed they were not quite intelligible to him. With regard to the estimates, he believed that 3,750,000*l.* for miscellaneous estimates was as large a sum as the estimates of other years; but there was considerable satisfaction in discovering that in this year there would be a saving of 32,000*l.* in those estimates. It was also quite clear that 450,000*l.* could be saved on the Militia, Navy, and Ordnance estimates. He hoped that the right hon. Gentleman's estimates, with regard to the increase of revenue, were formed on a more intelligible basis than the particular one with which they had to deal that night; for if the other estimates rested on the foundation which supported his calculations respecting the sugar duties, the House might jump at too quick a conclusion. They were told by the noble Lord the First Minister of the Crown, that the revenue would not lose much, perhaps only 10,000*l.* in the first year. That was certainly a consolation; but it should be remembered that there were two ways in which the revenue might sustain a loss—one by diminished duty, and the other by the maintenance of a differential duty in regard to foreign sugar. Both losses of duty were about to come into operation at the same time; and, notwithstanding, the House of Commons was told that the loss of revenue would not exceed 10,000*l.* in the first year. This seemed to him to be incredible. There might be an increase of revenue from other causes: lowness of price, for instance. But, looking to the price of sugar during the last year, he did not think there was any probability that there would be a further decline. But, even if prices were lower, how would it tell on the West Indian colonies. It appeared to him that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had misconceived the argument of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford, for he had no right to expect that the prices of 1848, in the last eight months, would bear that proportion to the price of the last eight months of 1847, which the first four months of 1848 bore to the first four months of 1847. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester (Mr. Bright) adhered to the Bill of 1846. With the permission of the House, he would enter on a calculation, based upon the plan of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford. The only difference between the two calculations was this, that in his (Mr. Cardwell's calculation, he should be able to show that the loss to the revenue would be upwards of 300,000*l.* If a comparison were taken between the plan of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester, which consisted in an adherence to the Bill of 1846, and the adoption of the proposed plan of the Government, the financial arguments to be derived would press more strongly against the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The consumption of sugar in the last year was 280,000 tons, of which 240,000 tons were of British plantation, and 48,000 of foreign production. It was admitted, that there was to be a loss of 1*l.* per ton on the 240,000, and yet the Chancellor of the Exchequer expected an increase of revenue. But was there to be no diminution on the 48,000 tons of foreign sugar consumed? With the same total amount of income the measure would displace foreign sugar, and replace it with West Indian. The Chancellor of the Exchequer omitted to take that into consideration. When he said that the first loss would amount to 1*l.* per ton, or 240,000*l.*, he made no reference to the quantity of foreign sugar which would be necessarily displaced. If this were taken into the calculation, each ton of foreign sugar, which in the last year produced 20*l.* a ton, would be replaced by British plantation sugar at 13*l.* a ton, showing at once a loss of 7*l.* a ton. If the consumption of British plantation sugar which would replace the foreign product, were taken at one-half, it would show a loss of 84,000*l.*, which, added to 240,000*l.* (namely, the loss of 1*l.* per ton on 240,000 tons of British plantation sugar), would make a total loss of 324,000*l.* This, he believed, to be a fair estimate. It was admitted by this legislation that increased consumption could not be expected. How would his calculation tell in future years? He would only take one year more. For the second year, the loss on British plantation sugar would be 2*l.* a ton, or 480,000*l.*, and 8*l.*

per ton instead of 7*l.* per ton on foreign sugar, which would make 96,000*l.* To that there would have to be added a diminished differential duty on foreign sugar, amounting to 54,000*l.*, making a total loss of 630,000*l.* This appeared to him to be the extent of the loss to the revenue which would be incurred on the second year. But the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge, used to calculate that a stimulant would be given for reduced duty in the shape of increased consumption, and that three-fifths of the duty taken off would be got back. Supposing that three-fifths were got back in that way, there would be a loss of 259,000*l.*, leaving a final loss of 370,000*l.* Therefore, in the first year the loss would be 300,000*l.*; in the second year, notwithstanding the increased consumption, it would be 370,000*l.*; and in the third year 600,000*l.* After that period, owing to the diminution of differential duties, the loss would diminish. With regard to the use of sugar in breweries, he understood from the hon. Gentleman the Member for Westbury, that the privilege of using sugar in those establishments was not to be withdrawn, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, that the increase of revenue would arise from the barley harvest, and from the great quantity of barley that would be converted into malt. That might be very advantageous to the farmers and to the Excise; but how would it affect the Customs with regard to the sugar duties? Admitting that brewing from sugar was an advantage to the West Indies, and that, in all probability, the sugar would be replaced by malt, it would be necessary to deduct a portion of sugar, for both could not be used in breweries and distilleries. The calculations he had made were founded on the Bill of 1846, as it operated in the last year. He was unwilling to occupy the House by alluding to the rest of the case, for he feared he had already wearied it with dry calculations; but when they were told by hon. Gentlemen opposite that the slave trade had not been increased, he asked to what evidence would they appeal if they wanted to know whether the slave trade had increased or not? Would they be content with the evidence of those who were trying to suppress it on the coast of Africa? Would they be content with the evidence of their own commissioners, and would they be content with the evidence of those who were carrying on the trade? [Mr. BRIGHT: Did the hon. Gentleman mean that he (Mr. Bright) said there would be no stimulant given to the slave trade? His observations related solely to the Bill of 1846.] He quite understood that the hon. Gentleman's observations went to show that he was entirely opposed to the slave trade; but he failed to see that any stimulant had been given to it by the Bill of 1846. He was about to ask, when the hon. Gentleman interrupted him, whether they would believe the evidence of their own commissioners as to whether the slave trade had increased or not? [The hon. Gentleman then read an extract from the evidence taken before the Select Committee to show that the prices of slaves and the price of estates had risen from 15 to 20 per cent when it was known that the importation of slave-grown sugar would be permitted in the British market on more favourable terms, and that the intimation of the news was received as a jubilee in the island of Cuba. A witness employed in the slave trade on the coast of Africa was asked by the Committee—

> "During the time you were on the coast of Africa, was the slave trade diminished or increased?"

The reply was, that it was increased.

> "To what circumstance do you attribute the increase?—I have spoken to Spanish and Portuguese captains, and they have told me that the increase is to be attributed to the extra demand for sugar in England.
>
> "You understood that the slave trade received a stimulus in consequence of an increased demand for sugar?—Yes, from Brazil."

Such was the evidence given before the Select Committee. It was proved that the slave trade was languishing in Cuba, and that the announcement of a demand in England was received as a jubilee by the planters. Well, then, he could have no hesitation in recording his vote against the proposition of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester. He believed the question they had to try was this. He admitted that protection was, in its nature, an unsatisfactory remedy; but he asked them, did they think they would be able to substitute free labour for slave labour, without giving to their West Indian colonies some encouragement of an effectual nature, even though it might be temporary? There were two motives by which that could be effected. There was, in barbarous countries, the physical force exercised by those who are superior in intellect; there was, in civilised countries, the stimulus of competition, and the rewards thereby obtained. They themselves put down the former plan in the West Indies, and had earned for themselves immemorial honour for the sacrifices they had made to accomplish their object; but they had left their work half done, and it had carried with it evils to which even slavery might be almost deemed unimportant, if they did not complete their work by supplying that other motive—the stimulus to the free employment of labour. Their own injured fellow-subjects, the British colonists, were engaged, to the best of their ability, in carrying out a difficult experiment; and they appealed to them for no large boon. They merely asked for temporary encouragement; and the hon. Member for Manchester now asked them, with this evidence before them, to refuse them that reasonable demand.

MR. JAMES WILSON declared that he would not have risen to address the House had he not been called upon by the Chairman to do so. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] He believed it was usual, when a Member was referred to, to concede to him the privilege of replying to observations which had been personally addressed to him; and under those circumstances he was sure he would obtain a hearing. He asked of the House to give him an opportunity of explaining the course he had pursued with regard to the Committee, whose recommendations they were now discussing. If the House would permit him, before he alluded to the observations of the hon. Member for Liverpool, he would refer to the observations which had fallen from the hon. Member for Manchester. Before the Committee was moved for, the noble Lord the Member for Lynn had asked him to become a member of the Committee, and he believed he had done so solely on public grounds; and he was sure he had not done so because he expected to find a partisan in him. When asked to become a member of the Committee, he should think himself unworthy of a place in that House if he did not seek to divest his mind of all preconceived opinions on the subject, and resolve to listen to the evidence, and take as impartial a view of it as he possibly could. He believed the noble Lord the Member for Lynn would do him the justice to say, that although he was opposed to him in all the views he and his Friends advocated in the Committee, he evinced, throughout the proceedings, an earnest desire to promote a full and fair inquiry on the subject. He considered, whatever might be their views of the principles on which the commerce of this country should be conducted, and with respect to what was right to be carried out, there was, with regard to the colonies, a certain exception existing, and a certain state of transition going on, which the law of 1846, and all previous laws, had hitherto recognised; and it was on that exception to the general principle he formed the opinion and judgment he had done with regard to the evidence that came before that Committee. He believed it was admitted on all hands, and not denied, that the enactment made in this country with regard to the colonists had fettered their power to obtain labour; and it would be desirable to place the employer and the employed in that fair position towards each other which it would be the advantage of both they should occupy. It was his opinion that it would be unwise in the Legislature of this country strictly to adhere to the principle of the Bill of 1846 in all its details; he thought it was necessary to make some modification in it, accompanied by other measures; and the hon. Member for Liverpool would recollect that while the inquiry was going on, before he became a Member of the Government, or thought of becoming a Member of it, that he did in confidence express an opinion to that hon. Gentleman as to the course he thought should be pursued—he did not mean in detail—with regard to the West Indian colonies. He believed he did say to him that it would be unwise to insist upon the strict letter of the law of 1846—that it was necessary to suspend that law, accompanied by such remedial measures as the House should think fit—or that there should be some limitation of that Act. He not only recognised the existing distress, and the necessity of relief being given, but he recognised most fully that relief should be given instantly and immediately; and in such a way as to be for the interest of the planters themselves. He was free to admit that in coming to consider how and in what way the interests of the planters were to be best considered in this case, that he was met by an accumulation of difficulties. He found it was difficult to reconcile a measure for the relief of the planter with the interests of the consumer and those of the revenue. The question to determine was, in what way relief would be given so as to be instantaneous in operation, and, in the long run, to promote as much as possible the future welfare of the colonies. At the same time they had to consider how this object would be accomplished with the least possible loss to the consumer and to the revenue. With regard to the proposition that was made, all that could be said with regard to it was that it would defer, for one year, the operation of the Bill of 1846, so far as regards the duty; but how could they otherwise accomplish their object? He thought they had adopted that plan which, while it would cause the smallest possible loss to the revenue and to the consumer, would be attended with the greatest possible advantage to the West India planter. The hon. Member for Liverpool had very properly stated that the reduction of colonial duty by a shilling would be a reduction of revenue in the first instance to that amount. He stated that the duty on colonial sugar had nothing to do with the price to the consumer, and that the duty on foreign sugar must alone regulate the price to the consumer; but the hon. Member for Liverpool, though he admitted there would be a reduction in the second year in the price to the consumer of the difference of the duty, did not do sufficient justice to the proposition before the House by carrying it through every part of the scale. By the Bill before the House, the duty would fall after the first year in the same way as the Bill of 1846 contemplated; and as the duty would fall until 1851, as that Bill contemplated, the price to the consumer would fall in the same proportion. One of the objects of the proposition was, that they should go to the lowest point, and the only fair way was to take it as a whole, and not to take only a particular part of it. They should take it in reference to what it had mainly in view, the permanent relief to the West Indies, with the least possible cost to this country. Did they contemplate that within a limited number of years a competition would exist between the West Indian colonies, and Cuba and Brazil? What he most feared from that competition was, not the ability of the West India planter to produce sugar as cheaply as in Cuba or Brazil; but what he feared was, that they would in the next four or five years have such a large increase in the production of sugar in Cuba and Brazil, and the West Indies themselves, that when that period arrived, the entire markets of Europe would be so surcharged that they must have a reduced price, not only in slave-grown sugar, but in their own colonies. When the West Indies were brought into competition with the foreign producer, it would be a very serious thing to have a very large overstocked market at that period. He therefore did think, and Her Majesty's Government did think, it was a most essential thing that they should take measures that would ensure a very largely increased consumption during that period. Then came the question of revenue; and he was free to admit that every reduction of colonial duty would be a reduction in the amount of duty received by the revenue; but as a consequence, not of this modification of the original Bill of 1846, but as a consequence of the original Bill of 1846 itself, they were entitled to look forward to a large increased consumption in each year, which would be sufficient to meet the diminished revenue from colonial sugar. If it were true that the consumer would not be injured in former years, and in latter years would be materially benefited, he believed the balance for the six years in favour of the consumer would be found to be in adopting the Government plan. With regard to the proposition to make a grant of money to the Board of Emigration, the whole argument tended to show that the greatest benefits to the colonies would be derived from the adoption of such a plan. The hon. Member for Manchester, on the part of the importers of foreign sugar, said, that the plan would be injurious to them in consequence of the increased differential duty. Now, although the importer would have to pay an increased duty of 1*s.* 6*d.* per cwt., he would certainly obtain a higher price for his produce. The hon. Member for Manchester was wrong in saying that by the proposed plan consumers would not be benefited, and that the importers of foreign sugar would be injured. In the one case the consumer would not be injured by the reduction of the duty on colonial sugar, and the importers of foreign sugar would not be injured, as they would obtain higher prices.

Lord NUGENT would state very shortly the reasons which would influence his vote on this subject. He had listened with great attention to the whole of this debate, and to the opening statement of the noble Lord. He was anxious that the considerations which would govern his vote should not be misunderstood, for he could truly say that he never came to one with more pain; but would add that, under the impressions he had always held on the great question of free trade, and on the immeasurably greater one of what was owed to the effectual abolition of the slave trade and slavery, he came to it without hesitation. The discussion on the question of the Speaker's leaving the chair had served only to confirm in him the impression he had received from the noble Lord's opening speech. He had given his vote last night for the Motion of the hon. Member for Droitwich, as a simple but earnest negative to the whole measure proposed by the Government. In what he might say of the principle of it, he wished to speak with the most perfect respect for the motives of its framers and supporters, some of whom were hon. Friends of his, from whom he lamented to differ utterly in conclusions. But, looking at the plain tendency of it, he must, under every form it might assume, give his hearty opposition to what he could not but feel to be a feeble, faithless, and wicked measure. Feeble, as satisfying the just wishes and expectations of nobody, advancing and assisting no interests, and conforming itself to no principle: faithless, because it violated positive and often-repeated engagements into which this country had entered with the West Indian body, whom we had made parties with us in abandoning and abolishing the two great crimes of slavery and the slave trade; and faithless to the nation to whom we had engaged ourselves, that it should never again be made party to encouraging or countenancing that atrocious iniquity: and wicked, as sacrificing to an ill-considered and misapplied theory a manifest and sacred duty; countenancing, for the sake of an alleged and problematical gain, a system we had often and solemnly declared to be one of rapine and murder, and leaving, as the law of 1838 did, in the same balance with a low and doubtful economy a great weight of human misery and blood. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Under Secretary for the Colonies agreed that there was a universal feeling throughout the country in behalf of the abolition of slavery; and he regretted deeply to hear his hon. Friend the hon. Member for Manchester—a distinguished member of that most venerable and amiable society whose great glory it was to have been ever foremost in every enterprise of humanity and justice—taking a course so opposite to the general feeling of the country, and specially and eminently of that venerable and amiable society of which he was a distinguished member, with regard to the abolition of slavery. The right hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Under Secretary for the Colonies rested the main defence of their views on what appeared a singular predicate. The entire and universal abolition of slavery they avowed to be the first wish common to us all. But this, say they, is hopeless, until free labour shall be brought into triumphant competition with slave labour, and slave labour shall be driven out of the market—until we can have shown the trafficker in spoliation and murder that spoliation and murder were bad political economy. Cast away all hope of ever abolishing slavery, of even abating its influence, till you can vanquish it in friendly competition, taking it by the bloody hand in open market, and dealing with it as you would with an honourable rival! Do not dissociate yourselves from the dealer in rapine and murder, but in friendly controversy proceed to show him and make him confess that you can undersell the plunderer and the manslayer! He never had heard so gentle a mode of propounding such a proposition, or of dealing with so frightful, so appalling a crime. He, for one, did not believe that slavery was to be abolished by competing with the traders who began by having stolen the raw material of the trade—man, and who possessed themselves also, by stealing, of the article labour, by which the manufactured produce was brought into the market. He could not bring himself to subscribe to that doctrine. The right hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer said the other night that an hon. Member told him that having voted for free trade in corn, he could not consistently refuse to vote for free trade in sugar. He (Lord Nugent) did not think that the right hon. Gentleman could have done justice to his hon. Friend's logic. He could not surely have constructed his syllogism so. He (Lord Nugent) would say with confidence that the principle of free trade, rightly understood, had nothing whatever to do with the proposition before the House. It did not touch—it did not approach it. No man subscribed more heartily than he did to the universality of the application of free-trade principles; but he had yet to learn that the principles of free trade included the doctrine of freely trafficking with the trader in stolen goods. There, to his apprehension began the plain distinction between the free-trader and freebooter. If this be included in free trade, why abolish the slave trade? Nay, why not revive it? Why not free trade in slaves, if free trade with those who deal in slave produce? Be consistent in your theory. If it be true, restore slavery and the slave trade manfully. Let not this nation encourage that indirectly which they dare not openly avow. He was told that it was useless and futile to endeavour to put an end to slavery by refusing slave-grown sugar, while we received other articles the products of slave labour. But were we to purchase slave-grown sugar whilst we could produce sugar by free labour, because we purchased other articles slave grown which we could not so produce? Were we not to strive to abate crime in one direction, till we were sure we could abolish it in all? There was another part of the plan, and not the least objectionable part of it, namely, the immigration project. He looked upon this part of the plan of the Government as one of the greatest aggravations of the present evils. The immediate effect of this forced immigration would be to revive the slave trade with all its horrors, and would give additional strength to it. It would encourage the savage warfare in Africa between the native kings, who make war on each other for the purpose of bringing prisoners to the slave market, or who sell their own subjects to the slavetrader as slaves. If such encouragement would be given to the slave trade by such forced immigration, what became of all the sacrifices this country had made for its suppression, and of the life-consuming coastguard on the shores of Africa which they had so long maintained? These were the grounds on which he, subscribing to its full extent to the doctrine of entire free trade, should give, that night, a protectionist vote; not a vote of commercial protection, but of moral protection against a great crime, against breach of compact, and against slavery. He would give it cordially for the Motion of the hon. Baronet.

Mr. MOWATT moved that the Chairman report progress.

Lord JOHN RUSSELL wished to make a few observations on the Motion of the hon. Member for Falmouth to report progress. He (Lord John Russell) hoped that the House would consent to divide on the Motion of the hon. Member for Manchester that night, and resume the consideration of the resolutions next day. He begged hon. Gentlemen to recollect the position in which they stood. He had made his statement with respect to the sugar duties so far back as the 14th of June. The question had been much debated since, and it was of great public importance that the resolutions should be agreed to and reported before the 5th of July. The House had before it the Amendment of the hon. Member for Droitwich; they had then before them the Amendment of the hon. Member for Manchester; and they had also heard a proposition made by his hon. Friend the Member for the University of Oxford, and also the proposition of the Government as to continuing the duty of 20*s.* on foreign sugar, instead of having it at 18*s.* 6*d.* Of course if this resolution was not agreed to, a large quantity of foreign sugar would be introduced into the market at the lower rate. He was sure the hon. Member for Manchester would not press for any unfair delay. He had made a very able speech on the subject that night; and he certainly could not do any injury to his proposition by at once taking the division on it.

After a short conversation, Mr. Mowatt's Motion was withdrawn.

The Committee divided on the question, that the words "in lieu of the duties now payable on sugar or molasses," stand part of the question:—Ayes 302; Noes 36: Majority 266.

List of the Ayes.

Abdy, T. N.
Acland, Sir T. D.
Adair, R. A. S.
Adderley, C. B.
Alcock, T.
Alford, Visct.
Anson, hon. Col.
Anstey, T. C.
Armstrong, Sir A.
Arundel and Surrey Earl of
Ashley, Lord
Bagge, W.
Bagot, hon. W.
Bagshaw, J.
Bailey, J.
Bailey, J. jun.
Baillie, H. J.
Baines, M. T.
Baldock, E. H.
Baldwin, C. B.
Bankes, G.
Barkly, H.
Baring, rt. hon. Sir F. T.
Baring, T.
Barnard, E. G.
Barrington, Visct.
Bellew, R. M.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Bentinck, Lord H.
Beresford, W.
Berkeley, hon. Capt.
Berkeley, hon. G. F.
Blake, M. J.
Boldero, H. G.
Boyd, J.
Boyle, hon. Col.
Bramston, T. W.
Brand, T.
Brisco, M.
Broadley, H.
Bruce, C. L. C.
Buller, C.
Bunbury, E. H.
Burghley, Lord
Burrell, Sir C. M.
Butler, P. S.
Buxton, Sir E. N.
Cabbell, B. B.
Callaghan, D.
Campbell, hon. W. F.
Cardwell, E.
Carter, J. B.
Caulfield, J. M.
Cavendish, hon. C. C.
Cavendish, hon. G. H.
Cavendish, W. G.
Chichester, Lord J. L.
Childers, J. W.
Christy, S.
Clay, J.
Clements, hon. C. S.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.
Clive, H. B.
Cockburn, A. J. E.
Codrington, Sir W.
Conolly, Col.
Corry, rt. hon. H. L.
Courtenay, Lord
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Craig, W. G.
Davie, Sir H. R. F.
Denison, J. E.
Dod, J. W.
Dodd, G.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Drax, J. S. W. S. E.
Duncombe, hon. O.

Duncuft, J.
Dundas, Adm.
Dundas, Sir D.
Dundas, G.
Dunne, F. P.
Du Pre, C. G.
East, Sir J. B.
Ebrington, Visct.
Edwards, H.
Egerton, Sir P.
Elliot, hon. J. E.
Emlyn, Visct.
Euston, Earl of
Evans, W.
Farnham, E. B.
Farrer, J.
Ferguson, Col.
Ferguson, Sir R. A.
Filmer, Sir E.
FitzPatrick, rt. hn. J.W.
Floyer, J.
Foley, J. H. H.
Forbes, W.
Fordyce, A. D.
Fox, S. W. L.
Freestun, Col.
Frewen, C. H.
Fuller, A. E.
Galway, Visct.
Gaskell, J. M.
Gladstone, rt. hon. W.E.
Goddard, A. L.
Godson, R.
Gooch, E. S.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Grace, O. D. J.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Granby, Marq. of
Greene, T.
Grenfell, C. P.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Grey, R. W.
Grogan, E.
Gwyn, H.
Haggitt, F. R.
Hale, R. B.
Hall, Sir B.
Hallyburton, Lord J. F.
Halsey, T. P.
Hamilton, G. A.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Hardcastle, J. A.
Hastie, A.
Hastie, A.
Hawes, B.
Hay, Lord J.
Hayter, W. G.
Henley, J. W.
Herbert, H. A.
Herbert, rt. hon. S.
Herries, rt. hon. J. C.
Hervey, Lord A.
Heywood, J.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hindley, C.
Hobhouse, rt. hn. Sir J.
Hobhouse, T. B.
Hodges, T. L.
Hodges, T. T.
Hodgson, W. N.
Hollond, R.
Hood, Sir A.
Hotham, Lord
Howard, hon. C. W. G.
Howard, hon. J. K.
Howard, hon. E. G. G.
Howard, Sir R.
Hudson, G.
Hughes, W. B.
Hume, J.
Ingestre, Visct.
Jervis, Sir J.
Johnstone, Sir J.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Jones, Capt.
Keogh, W.
Kildare, Marq. of
King, hon. P. J. L.
Knox, Col.
Labouchere, rt. hon. H.
Langston, J. H.
Lascelles, hon. W. S.
Lennard, T. B.
Lennox, Lord H. G.
Lewis, G. C.
Lincoln, Earl of
Lindsay, hon. Col.
Littleton, hon. E. R.
Locke, J.
Lockhart, A. E.
Lockhart, W.
Mackenzie, W. F.
Macnaghten, Sir E.
M'Cullagh, W. T.
Maher, N. V.
Maitland, T.
Mangles, R. D.
Manners, Lord C. S.
Manners, Lord G.
Marshall, J. G.
Marshall, W.
Martin, J.
Martin, C. W.
Masterman, J.
Matheson, A.
Matheson, J.
Matheson, Col.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Melgund, Visct.
Meux, Sir H.
Miles, P. W. S.
Miles, W.
Milner, W. M. E.
Milnes, R. M.
Monsell, W.
Morpeth, Visct.
Morris, D.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Mulgrave, Earl of
Mullings, J. R.
Napier, J.
Neeld, J.
Neeld, J.
Newdegate, C. N.
Newport, Visct.
Norreys, Lord
Nugent, Lord
O'Connell, M. J.
Ogle, S. C. H.
Packe, C. W.
Paget, Lord A.
Paget, Lord C.
Paget, Lord G.
Pakington, Sir J.
Palmerstone, Visct.
Parker, J.
Patten, J. W.
Pearson, C.
Pechell, Capt.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Pigot, Sir R.
Pinney, W.
Plowden, W. H. C.
Powlett, Lord W.
Price, Sir R.
Pusey, P.
Raphael, A.
Reid, Col.
Renton, J. C.
Ricardo, O.
Rice, E. R.
Rich, H.
Robartes, T. J. A.
Romilly, Sir J.
Rufford, F.
Russell, Lord J.
Russell, F. C. H.
Rutherfurd, A.
Sadlier, J.
Sandars, G.
Scott, hon. F.
Scully, F.
Seaham, Visct.
Seymer, H. K.
Sheil, rt. hon. R. L.
Shelburne, Earl of
Sheridan, R. B.
Sibthorp, Col.
Simeon, J.
Smith, J. A.
Smyth, J. G.
Smollett, A.
Somerville, rt. hon. Sir W.
Sotheron, T. H. S.
Spearman, H. J.
Spooner, R.
Stafford, A.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Stanton, W. H.
Stuart, Lord D.
Stuart, Lord J.
Stuart, H.
Sturt, H. G.
Sullivan, M.
Sutton, J. H. M.
Talbot, C. R. M.
Talfourd, Serj.
Tenison, E. K.
Thesiger, Sir F.
Thompson, Aldm.
Tollemache, J.
Towneley, J.
Townley, R. G.
Townshend, Capt.
Trollope, Sir J.
Turner, E.
Tyrell, Sir J. T.
Urquhart, D.
Vane, Lord H.
Verner, Sir W.
Vesey, hon. T.
Villiers, Visct.
Villiers, hon. F. W. C.
Vivian, J. H.
Waddington, H. S.
Walpole, S. H.
Ward, H. G.
Wawn, J. T.
Wilson, J.
Wilson, M.
Wodehouse, E.
Wood, rt. hon. Sir C.
Wortley, rt. hon. J. S.
Wrightson, W. B.
Wyvill, M.

TELLERS.

Tufnell, H.
Hill, Lord M.

List of the NOES.

Aglionby, H. A.
Bouverie, hon. E. P.
Bowring, Dr.
Brotherton, J.
Cobden, R.
Crawford, W. S.
Devereux, J. T.
Duff, G. S.
Duncan, G.
Evans, Sir De L.
Fagan, W.
Fox, W. J.
Greene, J.
Henry, A.
Keating, R.
Kershaw, J.
Lushington, C.
M'Gregor, J.
Mitchell, T. A.
Molesworth, Sir W.
Mowatt, F.
Muntz, G. F.
Osborne, R.
Pilkington, J.
Ricardo, J. L.
Salwey, Col.
Scholefield, W.
Smith, J. B.
Tancred, H. W.
Thicknesse, R. A.
Thompson, Col.
Thompson, G.
Thornely, T.
Trelawny, J. S.
Villiers, hon. C.
Williams, J.

TELLERS.

Gibson, rt. hon. T. M.
Bright, J.

House resumed. Committee to sit again.

House adjourned at twenty minutes past One.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

SPEECH OF BENJAMIN HAWES, Esq., RELATING TO THE COLONIAL OFFICE, Monday, June 26, 1848.—*See page* 1168.

Mr. HAWES: Before the Order of the Day is read, I am anxious to make a statement to the House, in accordance with the pledge I gave on Friday night, in order to enable it to judge of the correctness or incorrectness of certain statements made by the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord G. Bentinck) in his place in the course of the debate that evening. I wish to put myself, in the first place, entirely right with the House. I shall abstain from any expression which may be calculated to provoke any angry debate, or to wound the feelings of any one. And if, in the course of Friday evening, under, I humbly think, somewhat justifiable provocation, I made use of language which to the House may have appeared objectionable, I wish the House to understand that I withdraw such language altogether. But there were statements made, and imputations cast on the department in which I have the honour to serve, and upon myself, which I cannot possibly allow to pass without a distinct reply. The noble Lord made, in point of fact, two charges. There were charges, first, which he brought against the Colonial Office of withholding certain despatches, one from Sir H. Light, Governor of British Guiana, and one from Lord Harris, the Governor of Trinidad. I mention the former charge more especially because the noble Lord said the inclosure of the despatch had been sent to the Committee, but the despatch itself had been withheld. The other charge is entirely personal to myself, affecting my character, and my personal conduct and honour as a Member of this House. I shall deal, first, with the charges which relate to the Colonial Department. I shall reserve the latter charge for a distinct explanation. The noble Lord, as I understood, complained that a certain enclosure of a despatch from Governor Light, which he called Mr. Stipendiary Strutt's report, being the report of Mr. Strutt, who is a stipendiary magistrate in British Guiana, had been sent to the Committee, which was calculated to make some impression on the Committee more favourable to the views of my noble Friend at the head of the Colonial Office, than to those of the noble Lord. Now, the despatch of Sir H. Light was received on the 24th of April. The Committee, it was understood, were then deliberating on their report; and therefore that despatch was reserved for the papers which were to be laid on the table of the House for consideration preparatory to the debate. But I wish to call the attention of the House and of the noble Lord to the fact, that when Mr. Strutt's paper was communicated to the Committee, it was described as—

> "An extract from Mr. Stipendiary Strutt's report, dated December 31, 1847, transmitted in Governor Light's despatch, of March 12, 1848; received April 24, 1848;—"

clearly showing, therefore, that such a despatch was received at that time. There could, therefore, be no intention of concealing the fact that such a despatch had been received. The fact I have stated will be found in the 8th report, page 12, of the papers and evidence laid on the table of the House. As to the despatch, I have no hesitation in saying, I wish the despatch had been sent to the Committee with the report. But the fact was, that it did not occur to any gentleman in the Office that the despatch contained any new matter whatever. There was no portion of that despatch, except one I shall mention presently, which seemed to us to require its immediate transmission, inasmuch as the papers were about to be printed for the use of Parliament. But the charge is, that Mr. Strutt's report, which formed the enclosure, was sent, and that the despatch was omitted. Now, if hon. Members will refer to Governor Light's despatch, as printed in the papers laid before the House, it will be seen that there was a most important passage in the despatch, which would have added tenfold to the weight of the statement of Mr. Strutt. If, therefore, any object were to be gained, or any desire to improperly influence the Committee, it would have manifestly been gained by sending that despatch, in which Sir H. Light said, that "Mr. Strutt's remarks as to sugar are allowed generally to be correct." If we had wished to make an impression upon the Committee by means of that report, we should have sent the despatch. There could not have been a desire to conceal its contents, because, in point of fact, it was laid on the table, and was in circulation during the Whitsuntide recess. This plain statement of the facts must put an end to all the imputations of the noble Lord on the Colonial Department, as regards Sir H. Light's despatch. With respect to the Trinidad despatch, the noble Lord also complained that it had been withheld. That despatch was not received till the 5th of May. It passed in regular course through the department. After passing into my hands, it was forwarded to Lord Grey on the 8th of May, the very day on which the noble Lord moved for papers. That despatch consequently was, in compliance with the Motion of the noble Lord, printed; and it is to be found in the papers before the House. So far I have endeavoured to meet the charges of suppression in the case of those papers. I would simply remind the House on this point, that as the despatches were published with their respective dates, and the dates of their reception also, it is impossible to maintain that there was any intentional withholding of the despatches. Incidentally I wish to clear one point on which there is some doubt, having reference to a question which was put by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Goulburn). If he refers to my examination before the Committee, he will find that I stated, that there was a despatch containing some account of the state of the island of Jamaica, but not of that general kind which I all along understood he referred to. I stated distinctly, that that despatch was preparing for the House. Some time afterwards I find, on referring to the papers, the right hon. Gentleman asked me a question in the House. I take the question and answer from the *Times* of the 16th of May:—

> "Mr. Goulburn inquired, whether any advice had yet been received from Jamaica, giving an account of the state and prospects of that island?
>
> "Mr. Hawes was sorry to say, that the Government had not yet received what was called the blue book, and had only general accounts from the island."

The same right hon. Gentleman put another question to me on the 6th of June; and in answer to that question, and in reference to that particular mail, I stated that "the Colonial Office had not received any account of any distress existing in Jamaica;" and the fact is, that what is called "the general account" has not arrived to this hour. In answering those questions, I assure the right hon. Gentleman that I referred entirely to the general account, and I know I can rely upon the just and generous interpretation of the right hon. Gentleman of any statement I make to the House. I mention this matter only incidentally, but I wish to stand well with him and the House in a matter of this kind. I now come to the charge personal to myself. I can assure the noble Lord, that, in dealing with this charge, although I labour under very strong feeling, and although I find that my private and public character are entirely at stake, I shall not allow myself to use a hasty expression. So keen is my sense of the evil consequence of altercation in this House—so keen is my apprehension of the results likely to ensue out of doors, affecting the character and authority of public men and of this House, that I shall not now be guilty of using a single expression—although I labour under very strong feelings—calculated to give the slightest offence. I shall read to the House what I understand to be the charge of the noble Lord. I again quote from the *Times;* the accuracy of the report I can confirm. The noble Lord said, that—

> "If these minutes and memorandums were not got up subsequently to his examination of the 5th of April, he was troubled with the shortest memory since the days of green-bag notoriety, when Theodore Majocchi gave his answer of *Non mi ricordo*. That was the charge I made, and the hon. Gentleman may take his option whether or not, after these various discussions and various minutes to which he affixed his name, he, on the 5th of April, could not remember the receipt of any despatch of an important nature."

The noble Lord stopped there. But I beg the House to recollect that my answer was, that I was "not aware of any despatches of any importance that had been withheld from the Committee." The noble Lord, in continuation, said—

> "That he (Mr. Hawes) could not on the 5th of April recollect, notwithstanding these separate discussions on the subject of that despatch, and its importance, that any important despatch, or that any despatch connected with the agricultural and social state of Jamaica, had been received. That is the charge I make against the hon. Gentleman; and I care nothing whether he makes his defence against the one or the other of the horns of the dilemma on which I place him, and from which he cannot escape."

Now, the first horn of the dilemma is that I declared I was not aware of any important despatch that had been received from the Governor of Jamaica. I will read precisely what I said. Mr. Goulburn, in the course of my examination before the Sugar and Coffee Planting Committee, put this question to me:—

> "Can you explain the reason why we have no accounts, in the papers laid before Parliament, of the character of those from other colonies?"

My answer was—

> "I imagine you allude to the blue book, to the annual accounts from Jamaica."

The next question was—

> "There is no account of the state of the island, as in the other cases?"

I replied—

> "That is generally comprised in the annual report called the blue book, and that has not been received."

The next question was—

> "Does not the Governor write despatches to the Colonial Office on the subject of the state of the island, besides that one particular paper in the course of the year?"

My answer was—

> "Yes, certainly; but I am not aware of any despatches from him of any importance"—

I beg the House to recollect that here the noble Lord stopped short—omitting what I added, namely, the words "which have been withheld from the Committee." It will be seen, that I spoke of despatches not having been withheld. I said—

> "There are despatches; but I am not aware of any despatches from him of any importance which have been withheld from the Committee."

The next question was—

> "We have received from other colonies very considerable details as to the state of those colonies, and as to the progress of agriculture; but from Jamaica I can find nothing of the kind?"—"Until very recently" (I said) "I think there has been no such general despatch received; that despatch is now printing for this Committee. I ought to add that the Governor has been in the island but a very short time."

The last remark applied only to the annual report, to the blue book—the annual account of the island of Jamaica, which up to this hour has not been received. Then the noble Lord the Chairman of the Committee said—

> "That is preparing, is it?" (and I answered) "There is a despatch, but still not of the nature to which the right hon. Gentleman alludes; however, whatever we have will be furnished."

Now, I ask the House to say whether or not there is anything there to justify the statement of the noble Lord that I declared that I was not aware that any important despatches had been received from Jamaica? I have shown the House, by reference to my evidence, that my statement was not that no despatches had been received, but that none of importance had been withheld. The despatch to which I was referring in my evidence was one which did not make that strong impression on my mind that it has on others; but it was one that I was acquainted with, and which I read with some attention on account of one portion of its contents, to which I will refer. That despatch, which I have now before me, occupies about a single page of the blue book. There are two important points in that despatch. The noble Lord attaches importance to that portion of it where the Governor says that a protective duty of *2d.* in the pound should be laid upon foreign sugar as against colonial sugar, which he suggested should be a penny a pound; and where the Governor states his general opinion in favour of protection. That is the point to which the noble Lord attaches importance. I own that I do not attach the same importance to it; but what I did think of importance in the despatch was this, that in referring to the report of the Legislative Assembly, which accompanied this despatch, on the general state of agriculture, and the cost of production of sugar, the Governor says—

> "With respect to the cost of cultivation, an examination of the tables will show that the stated general average of the cost per hundred-weight rests upon a basis which makes it a very unsafe criterion in many respects, and in none more so than as the criterion of a general average rate for the wages of agricultural labour."

Looking at that part of the despatch, therefore, there could be no motive whatever in withholding it from the Committee, according to the views of the noble Lord, because it shakes every calculation on which the amount of a differential duty is calculated. But now I come to the other horn of the dilemma, which I feel that I am equally relieved from; and when I have answered that, I shall call upon the noble Lord to withdraw the charge he has made against me. Now, I hold the despatch in my hand; and I must again trouble the House with reading from it the exact minutes, and stating accurately the results of my inquiries as to the non-production of that despatch before the Committee at the time they were sitting. It was received on the 27th of March; and the first minute is made by a gentleman in the Colonial Office, Mr. Cox—a gentleman of high honour, of considerable ability, and in whom I have the most implicit reliance. He is known to many in this House, and I cannot speak more highly of any man than I can of Mr. Cox. Now, Mr. Cox states—

> "This is a report (meaning the report of the Legislative Assembly) for a copy of which the West India Committee have asked. We had a copy in the Votes, which was to have been sent to the Committee to-day. Would it not be better to send instead a copy of this despatch, which is important, with the report and the evidence, which we have now got for the first time? There are two copies—if so it is desirable to send it to-day."

The next person who received that despatch was Mr. Elliot, the assistant Under Secretary of State, and he says, addressing me—

> "I conclude that you will agree with me that the despatch ought to be given in at the time as the report which it enclosed."

That is dated the 27th of March. It came to me on the same day, and I attached my initials. It goes to my noble Friend, Earl Grey, I imagine on the 28th, because it often happens that I do not get a despatch until I have returned from this House, and my minute then bears date at the latest moment of the day on which I receive it. My noble Friend received this despatch, I believe, on the 28th; and his first Minute on it is this:—

> "This may be laid before the Committee as suggested; but it also requires to be answered with some care."

And then he proceeds to give directions for drafting the despatch by which he intends to answer it. Lord Grey returned the despatch to the head of the West Indian Department, with this minute on March 30th. He also saw the head of that department on the same day, and gave him some additional verbal instructions respecting the intended answer. This was to have gone out by the mail of the 1st April. The draft answer was accordingly prepared; and it was forwarded to Lord Grey, according to custom, together with his minute of March 30th. Lord Grey had, therefore, no reason for doubting that the first part of his minute—that which directed the despatch received to be laid before the Committee—had been executed. When the draft answer was considered by his Lordship, it appeared to require more deliberation than had been at first supposed; consequently, it could not go on the first of April; it remained, therefore, for several days, until the 14th of that month, in my noble Friend's hands. On the 14th, he returned it again to the department, and the answer proceeded. But, if so, why was it not laid before the Committee, either after the first direction of the 30th of March, or after its return to the department on the 14th April, in time to answer the object of the noble Lord? I will state to the House, that, if blame could be fairly attributed to me or to my noble Friend, I would take that blame openly before the House, and would not allow it to be transferred to any other gentleman. Before, however, I came down to the House, I spoke to Mr. Cox, and under the very peculiar circumstances of this case—affecting personal character—I am able to say, with his free consent, that he was responsible for the omission; that he ought to have seen that the direction was executed, but that he omitted to do so. I ask the House, then, whether, under all the circumstances, I can give any fairer or more frank reply to the charge of the noble Lord. I hope I have given it also with perfect temper; and I now appeal to the House for protection against a very gross charge that has been made against me, because the noble Lord said, if my memory did not fail me, that those minutes must have been fraudulently concocted in order to meet the case when it was first discovered. Now, I ask the noble Lord, in all fairness, whether he means to adhere to that? I ask the noble Lord—a gentleman holding a high position in this House, and in the country—whether he can for one moment say that this charge can be maintained or justified? And, Sir, if the noble Lord adheres to that charge, I shall then call upon this House to institute a complete inquiry into all the facts of the case. I will not submit to a half acquittal in this matter. I will be convicted of the guilt which is imputed to me, or I will again stand fairly and honourably before the House. I am not aware that, during the long period I have had the honour of a seat in this House, I ever yet had such doubt and discredit cast upon me; and I think I have a right, having fully, fairly, and frankly explained this matter to the House, to appeal to the noble Lord, to ask him now to state whether he means to adhere to this charge? and if he does, to allow me to have it investigated. I will give him every name—I will conceal nothing—and I trust, when that is done, that the House will see that the declaration I now make, that I am entirely free from so groundless a charge, is one which will be sustained by evidence, and backed by the credit of gentlemen of the highest character.

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